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# English Language Teaching

VOLUME XIII · NUMBER 1

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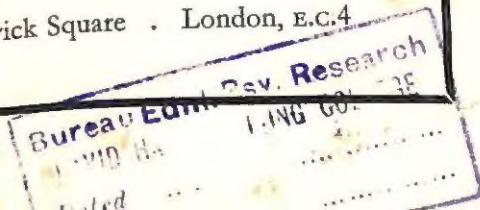
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# English Language Teaching

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VOLUME XIII · NUMBER 1 · October-December 1958

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London W1

*Published Quarterly. Annual Subscription 5s. post free.  
Single issues 1s. 6d.*

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The views expressed in *ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING* are the contributors' own and not necessarily those of the Council or the Editorial Board. Contributors may submit summaries of their proposed articles. These summaries should in general be about one-tenth of the length of the article itself.

# African Students and the English Background

ALAN WARNER

'Please sir, who is Father Christmas?' The speaker was a member of my final year General degree class in English at Makerere College. We were discussing a comment on Dickens: 'In spirit he was much nearer to Father Christmas than to Karl Marx', from Somervell's *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. The student who spoke had a rather misty notion of Karl Marx but for Father Christmas there was no reference, no echo, no background. Some of the other students were more fortunate. They had heard of Father Christmas, though their ideas about him were far from clear. One of them thought he was an early Christian Father. No one in the class had seen a man dressed as Father Christmas or even a picture of him.<sup>1</sup>

This example will serve to point the difficulty and state the problem that I wish to discuss, the problem of missing background, of the field of reference that is not there, so that the expected release of meaning does not come. The absence of a reference for Father Christmas leads one to the realization that a great deal of the background of Christmas, that is the common heritage of a European child, is missing for an African child. This holds for those brought up as Christians as well as for Moslems and Pagans. The Christmas-tree, the mistletoe, the plum-pudding, are not part of the world they know.

Recently some of our first-year students were asked in an examination to discuss a poem by Herrick entitled *Ceremonies for Christmasse*. I quote the first half of it:

Come bring with a noise,  
My merry, merry boys,  
The Christmas log to the firing;  
While my good Dame, she  
Bids ye all be free;  
And drink to your heart's desiring.

With the last year's brand  
Light the new block . . .

<sup>1</sup>I have not in this article considered the use of visual aids. These can play a very useful subordinate part in the explanation of background, and I found that a picture of Father Christmas was helpful at this point.



A large number of students misread the rather unfamiliar word 'brand' as 'brandy'. This was probably due to ignorance of background rather than to ignorance of language. The notion of blazing logs and the family gathering round the hearth is foreign to tropical Africa, but heavy drinking is a common feature of the current celebration of Christmas in East Africa, as in many other parts of the world.

These difficulties, caused by a lack of familiarity with the European background of Christmas, are typical of the difficulties to be found in many other fields. The absence, or partial absence, of the references needed for full understanding, has an important bearing on the teaching of language and literature, and indeed on education in general.

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Some time ago I chose for a language exercise with Intermediate students an essay from the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* entitled 'The First Anniversary'. The writer was celebrating the anniversary of his decision, made under doctor's orders, to give up smoking. He found that his sense of smell had been restored to him and that scents long forgotten and drowned in a haze of tobacco came back vividly to him. So it was mainly an essay on smells in England, and the author let his imagination carry him pleasantly away down avenues of scarcely perceptible odours. 'Why do babies smell mealy and small boys of dry biscuits?' (I asked my students, in a written exercise, if they agreed that babies smelt mealy, but the question was not very successful. Many took the wrong sense of 'mealy', taking it to mean milky, i.e. having had a meal, the baby's meal being milk.) Some of the smells mentioned were general and international: the smell of new tennis balls, new paint, petrol. But others were particular and rooted in the English background. 'The slow mustiness of the potting-shed' was meaningless to all but the one English student in the class. Most of the others imagined a potting-shed to be a shed where water-pots or cooking-pots were made or stored. When the writer visited his son's school he recognized in the changing rooms, 'that subtle composite of bat oil, cricket gear, and stale sweat, which any batsman will recognize as the smell of the hope of scoring 50'. Very few African schools play cricket, and in those that do there are no pavilions of the kind envisaged here. The enthusiasm of many Englishmen for cricket is something that



most Africans find it difficult to understand. To get across to a class the full meaning of such a sentence as this is probably an impossible task.

There was another sentence in this article that every student failed to understand: 'Next year, perhaps, I shall take [this anniversary] as much for granted as birth and marriage, over which I get into a lot of trouble in the course of twelve months.' Failure to remember an anniversary, to give the expected flowers or present to wife or husband, has no meaning in Africa. Anniversaries are not celebrated. The stock advice given by marriage counsellors and magazine editors to a husband to 'court' his wife with gifts of flowers on her wedding anniversary, and never to forget her birthday, is related to English and American situation, not to African situation.

In short, my students, reading this essay by themselves would get perhaps half the total meaning. Reading it in class with an English lecturer filling in background and explaining English situation, they would get a good deal more, but some of it is still likely to remain very imperfectly understood.

These examples will I trust, be sufficient to reveal the importance of this problem of missing background. Where a passage, or even a single word, is deeply imbedded in the context of English or European situation, it will present difficulties for an African reader, occasionally perhaps insuperable difficulties, though I think this is much less often the case than might be thought.

I speak here of African readers because my own experience has been with them, but similar difficulties will clearly be found wherever English language and literature are taught to those whose childhood and youth belong to a world quite different from the world of England, or even of Europe. All over the world to-day the children of one culture, often a confused, disintegrating, incomplete culture, are being educated in the language and literature of another culture. Clearly the success of such education will depend considerably upon the teacher's ability to make available and meaningful to his pupils the background and tradition in which the language and literature is rooted.

This is a formidable teaching problem and there is no easy solution to it. Knowledge of language and awareness of situation and context grow slowly together. I doubt if there are any really effective short cuts, such as lectures on English life and traditions.

My own conviction is that the best way of supplying missing reference and background is through the channels of English literature, using that term in a wide sense. The reading of English novels, poems, or plays is constantly facing the reader with English situation.



One of my colleagues has put the point cogently in the following words:

English creates, quicker than most things, a common air to breathe. English Literature brings England to those Africans who cannot go there, in a way more intimate and comprehensive than any other subject can. It exerts on the students' minds the force, subtle and continual, of English *situation*. There is an insistent challenge made, to understand, to partake imaginatively, and above all to judge, to evaluate in the western way: 'Why does she behave like this? How would you feel? Do you think his conduct is patronizing? Is her reference to his family uncalled-for? What *is* uncalled-for? What is patronizing? What is *conduct*?' These are the kind of questions that drama and the novel pose.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the reading of English literature builds up a field of reference in the student's mind and memory. The teacher can then explain a word or an idea by saying: 'Do you remember Miss Bates in *Emma*? . . . ' or 'You remember how Pip is made to feel common by Estella in *Great Expectations*'. . . '. Concepts like irony or snobbery are very difficult to explain without reference to literature. Even a relatively simple word like 'hearth', which is foreign to African tradition, will become more meaningful if it is associated with a context, such as Kipling's poem *The Harp Song of the Dane Women* or *Lot 96* by C. Day Lewis, which begins:

Lot 96: A brass-rimmed ironwork fender.

It had stood guard for years, where it used to belong,  
Over the hearth of a couple who loved tenderly.

If the students in the class which was discussing 'the spirit of Father Christmas' had read *The Christmas Carol* my task of explanation would have been much easier. A reference to that story would have helped to fill in the missing background, even though Father Christmas himself does not appear in it.

But while we call upon African students to build up a field of English reference and background through literature we should ourselves, through reading and experience and contact with those we teach, build up a field of African reference, which we can draw upon in our teaching. An African parallel or contrast will often serve to illuminate the meaning of an English custom or concept. The meaning of 'dowry' for example inevitably invites comparison with 'bride-price', and once the difference is clearly understood the words should not be confused as they sometimes are.

The basis of teaching is successful communication and a good teacher will develop a quick sensitivity to his pupils' reception.

<sup>1</sup>M. M. Carlin. An unpublished paper on *The Ideal Arts Course*.

When a word or reference slips out that is likely to be obscure to his listeners, an almost instinctive reaction will make him hesitate and take a sounding of his class to see if he is still in contact with them. I believe this kind of sensitivity develops naturally, but its growth is probably quickened by a conscious awareness of the need for it.

I do not mean to suggest that a teacher should avoid using a word or reference that will be unfamiliar to his pupils, but that he should take them with him as far as he can in every such case. To refer again to my first example, the problem will not be solved by avoiding any reference to Father Christmas, but rather by the fullest development of valid references and associations for that legendary northern figure.

## Splendours and Miseries of a Literature Teacher

D. J. ENRIGHT

The following are no more than the disorderly reflections of an English Literature teacher abroad. One who has never taught anything else, who now finds himself somehow teaching a First Year English Composition class at an Asian university (and actually enjoying it), and who realizes that in fact he has been teaching a good deal of language all along. These reflections are set down here in the strong suspicion that there must be many other people in a similar position.

There is of course a sense in which all literature teaching is language teaching—excepting perhaps survey courses and set lectures on life-and-work (which have been on the way out for a long time now: their chief advantage was that, once written, they involved no further effort, and could eventually be printed). The study of literature is the study of words: a vocabulary exercise on the highest level, a lesson in idioms, and an instruction in grammar—if often negatively ('The poet puts it this way. You had better *not*!'). And it must be a highly self-disciplined lecturer who is able to prevent one word from leading to another: 'Note this interesting adjective. How different the meaning would have been, had the poet used this supposed synonym. . . .'



All the same, the proportion of vocabulary work contained in a literature lecture—by which, I had better say now, I mean chiefly *explication de texte* accompanied by the more general considerations which arise therefrom—does vary enormously from country to country. And sometimes the unfortunate lecturer himself will hardly be able to see the work he is nominally teaching for the words he is having to explain. At times one is sorely tempted to throw up the sponge. As one translates Mr Eliot's Italian, Latin, French, German and Sanskrit into English, and one's English into Basic English, and one's Basic English into sub-Basic English, one finds oneself crying silently, 'Let me teach the ABC instead—someone has to do it!'

In the Far East (at any rate), the literature man may soon come to think of himself—however others may think of him—as a god with feet of clay. 'A real Englishman, with an Oxford/Cambridge degree!' his colleagues exclaim. 'You must teach Literature. As for Language, we can teach that.'

'But my students don't understand—they don't understand the words! Can't I take on just a little English Conversation?' He thinks that at the worst he could manage better than the weekly 'English Hour' on the radio: 'Did—you—play—baseball—yesterday?' 'No—I—did—not.' 'Did—you—play—football—yesterday?' and so forth.

But no, that will never do. He wonders whether this reluctance on their part is a sign of honour or of contempt.

'We have all studied English Grammar', they tell him, 'after the methods of . . .' And out roll the distinguished names, names alone to him. 'But you . . . a graduate of Oxford/Cambridge . . . a Writer'—a status not difficult to achieve—'You can give our students something better than Grammar. You can give them Inspiration. . . .' For Inspiration has nothing to do with Understanding.

A recent writer on Japan flings out at the gentlemen from Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard, stuffing *The Waste Land* into students who at the end of it all cannot direct a lost tourist to a hotel two blocks away. He confesses to 'an angry desire to hurl rocks through the ivory towers of the pedagogues, from Oxford and Cambridge especially, who could, surely, have used their influence a bit more in the direction of giving the brain-racked Japanese student a better English-language deal'. The pedagogues in question will, surely, be the first to sympathize with his outburst.

But, after all, there is another side to it.

Firstly, the circumstances which the writer describes are in part due to the wartime closure to the English language and to the post-war upgrading of foreign language schools to university status (and universities cannot teach languages plain and simple). These factors

will soon be neutralized by the ever-increasing American language-teaching drive, at all levels, and by the travel grants made to Japanese teachers by various agencies, British as well as American. Already pure literature teachers—if indeed they can be described as ‘pure’—form a much smaller proportion of the foreign educational community than the writer seems to suppose.

Secondly, ‘English ought to be kept up’, true enough, but there is no great danger of its not being kept up. Commerce and Diplomacy will see to that. What is more to the point, it seems to me, is that English Literature ought to be kept up. I can see no reason why we should *all* be teaching students how to direct lost tourists to their hotels, or preparing them for an office desk. Literature is not ‘useful’ in that narrow sense, nor will the teaching of Literature bear such immediate and obvious fruits. But anyone who has travelled in Asia will have recognized the underlying contempt for the English language held by those who know it solely as a medium of international trade, the soulless jargon of the compradores. We teachers of Literature, after all, are under no real obligation to apologize for not waiting on trade or politics.

A modern Caliban might well say, ‘You taught me language; and my profit on’t is, I know how to direct tourists to their hotels, *and* I can judge your vaunted Culture by reading the brightly coloured books you export to us’. For even a common inability to direct tourists doesn’t appear to have impaired the sales all over the East of blood-and-sex glossies. The English-language contents of the average book-store are as follows: a row of serious grammars, dictionaries, dictionaries of synonyms and antonyms and of quotations, and ‘Get English Quick’ guides; a row of Everyman and Modern Library; two rows of relatively dignified Penguins; three rows of ‘medical’ books; stacks of rather dubious picture-magazines; and then acres of low-priced Mickey Spillane-type paper-backs. If the Oxford and Cambridge pedagogues give up stuffing T. S. Eliot etc. into their students and devote themselves exclusively to ‘simple (even Basic) English and some semantics’ (I quote the same writer on Japan), then we can look forward to an increase in the sales of the magazines and the Mickey Spillanes. That’s what Mickey Spillane is—‘basic’.

We can also look forward to a decline in cultural (if you like, spiritual) prestige for the English-speaking world.

It is stupid and dangerous to argue that ‘people like that sort of literature’ and therefore they will not think the worse of the purveyors. We can feel for drug addicts, but none of us, not even the addicts, admire those who traffic in the commodity. For example, the Kabuki Theatre is characterized by killings of the most bar-



barous kind, the slitting of bellies and the lopping off of heads; and though the killing is stylized and there is no attempt to make the blood look 'real', it is still barbarous. But in Japan the film of *Richard III* (a 'highbrow' British film, at that) met with the widespread and indignant objection that the stabbing of Richard was repellent, sensational and vulgar.

There seems to be a feeling today that, in the urgent need to teach English as quickly as possible, films and glossies and *Reader's Digest* will suffice as representatives of our western culture. No doubt some people will lap it up and ask for more. But they won't pretend to themselves that it is *real* culture. *Real* culture will be their own ancient religious-historical verse epics.

In short, the basic argument for the teaching of our literature abroad is simply this: we owe it to ourselves, as well as to others, to offer standards whereby the *use* of language can be judged, and to prove that, in spite of some indications to the contrary, we do ourselves possess such standards.

Returning to this 'Inspiration without Understanding' theory. No sensible person will want to make any great claims for it; yet there *is* something in it, just as there is something in every human being which is not amenable to rational analysis and command. And just as human beings cannot be won indefinitely with sacks of rice, travel grants and free language lessons.

Circumstances change with countries, of course, and whatever the country the teacher will find himself in part taking advantage of his students' prejudices and preconceptions and in part engaged in combating them. In Japan, for instance, he should try to persuade his classes that a little ordinary down-to-earth understanding is not out of place. In Thailand—or so it seems to me—he will rather need to persuade them that a poem cannot be reduced to a simple paraphrase and that they must be prepared not to understand everything, and not to give up because they don't. Some races are less romantic in this respect than others, and a lack of romance is as bad as an excess of it.

In any case, no literature teacher is going to belabour his students with incomprehensibilities for long. The strain—on the teacher, I mean—is too great. It seems to me that, whatever the country and whatever the national approach to literature, the survey courses and the old-style formal lecturing on the Philosophy of Wordsworth or on the Epic, if they have to be done, can best be done by native teachers in the language of the country. The foreign teacher can then concentrate on textual interpretation: a tactful mixture, according to his students' needs, of explication, 'talking outwards' from the text, and vocabulary exploration. The results will be

uneven, and otherwise difficult to gauge, but he can be sure that what he has done could not be done in any other way and that it fills an immeasurably deep and permanent human need.

Moreover, from the strictly utilitarian point of view, there are many people, and not the worst, whose grasp on a language as such will be strengthened enormously by the experience (narrow and deep rather than wide and shallow) of the literature written in that language. Can we really bring ourselves to believe in a foreign idiom until we have come across it in the work of a reputable author? And, incidentally, a literature class of this explicatory sort can well accommodate a certain amount of 'English Conversation', not to mention instruction in grammar. And the 'Conversation'—to judge from the reports—is likely to be considerably more adult and spontaneous than what goes by that name on the timetable.

For one word leads to another, as I've suggested, and one thing leads to another. The teacher will know when to stop. And that reminds me . . .

## 'What's This?' or 'What is This?'

### *Some Objections to the Teaching of the Conversational Short Forms to Beginners*

P. G. WINGARD

In English we have a whole range of conversational short forms used with several of the anomalous finites and written with an apostrophe. A few random examples are: *I'm, you've, they'd, he'll, needn't, shouldn't*. The present article will only consider forms based on the present tense of the verb *to be*, since these are normally the very first verbal items in a graded English course for foreign beginners.

In older courses using a reading approach, these short forms were often completely neglected. Now that everyone agrees that there must be a sound oral foundation, it is sometimes assumed that the short forms *must* be taught first, since they are the ones used in speaking. English spoken with the long forms, it is argued, is stilted and 'un-English'. And if the short forms are not learned first, it is said, they will never be properly assimilated.



These are the only arguments I have heard in favour of beginning with the short forms. There are doubtless others, and it would be interesting to hear the full case argued. The purpose of this article, however, is to argue the opposing point of view, and to suggest why it might be better to begin with the long forms.

Why do foreigners learn English? Their purposes are diverse; but at least it can be said that the aim of speaking English is only one of a number of aims, and not necessarily the most important. For most learners reading and writing will be at least as important as speaking. If this is so, it seems to follow that the right material for beginners is that which provides a general foundation for all language use, rather than that which is confined to the spoken language. The *method* must be oral, because this is the best way for learners to gain command of the structural basis of the language. But the *material* should, as far as possible, be common to both written and spoken English. This means the long forms, not the short ones.

Given a class of absolute beginners, what is our first aim? I should reply: It is that they should be able to say and understand *something* useful in English in every lesson, including the first. Nothing succeeds like success. Confident performance at the simplest level is the first objective. This is one reason why structure grading is so important. Such grading cannot be too detailed. Any unnecessary complexity at this stage is to be avoided like the plague.

Now, consider the following structural patterns, all of which will undoubtedly be needed within the first few weeks of the course:

*Short forms where possible*

What	's this	?
What	's that	?
What	is it	?
	Is this	your hat?
	Is that	your hat?
	Is it	your hat?
	That's	my hat.
	It's	my hat.
Yes,	This is	my hat.
	it is	.
No,	it is ..	n't.

*Long forms throughout*

What	is this	?
What	is that	?
What	is it	?
	Is this	your hat?
	Is that	your hat?
	Is it	your hat?
	That is	my hat.
	It is	my hat.
Yes,	This is	my hat.
	it is	.
No,	it is	not.

The core of these patterns is the part enclosed in the boxes. On the right we have only two basic patterns. Each statement form

'mirrors' in reverse the corresponding question form. On the left there are four basic patterns, though some people might feel inclined to count the *isn't* pattern as a fifth. The difficulty, however, is not just the greater number of patterns. Instead of 'mirroring' pairs we have three sets of three items. And each of the three sets differs from the other two:

's this	's that	—
Is this	Is that	Is it/is it
—	That's	It's
This is	—	it is(n't)

There are, of course, perfectly simple phonetic reasons for these awkward variations; but these are of no help to us in solving our teaching problem. In fact, it is even more confusing to the beginner than would appear from the above tables. He has not an apostrophe to signal to him that 's replaces *is*. On paper, at least, the two have one letter in common, whereas to the beginner's ear they have nothing at all in common; for, in all these short forms just listed, 's has the unvoiced consonant [s], whereas, in the long forms, *is* has the voiced consonant [z].

At this point supporters of the 'conditioned reflex' view of language learning will perhaps raise objections somewhat as follows:

'You are making mountains out of molehills. It does not matter tuppence whether the patterns have any logic or order about them. All the pupils have to do is to learn them by imitation and repetition. They do not have to think about them or analyse them.'

It is quite true, of course, that learning these patterns is not a matter of grammatical explanations or analysis. But neither is it a matter of pure imitation. The human mind just does not work that way. At the risk of labouring the obvious, it is worth emphasizing the importance of analogy in language learning. I am thinking of analogy not as a logical process, but as an instinctive human activity—perhaps the one above all others that makes language possible at all. One sees it at work in a baby learning his mother tongue and a beginner learning a foreign language. For instance, if the beginner has learned even one structural pattern, he finds no difficulty at all in using new content words by substitution in that pattern. It should be the language teacher's business to make the maximum use of this helpful faculty, while steering clear of the manifold possibilities of false analogy which lie in the path.

There are so many difficulties which *cannot* be postponed. The sounds of English, for example: these can be graded to some extent, but we need them all, or nearly all, in the first few weeks. Stress and intonation too: these must be right from the start if they are to



be right at all. This is one more reason why the early structural patterns must be utterly simple, since structure is one thing which can be graded very finely indeed.

With this thought in mind, let us look at a few more examples of short and long forms—those employing the personal pronouns:

*Short forms where possible*

Where	am I Am I	? right?
No,	I'm I'm	John Smith. not.
Yes,	I am	.

*Long forms throughout*

Where	am I Am I	? right?
No,	I am I am	John Smith. not.
Yes,	I am	.

Here we have three patterns with the short forms and only two with the long forms. The same applies with *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *we* and *they*. But with all of these except *I* there is the added problem of two alternative negative patterns: *you're not/you aren't* and so on. Are we to teach both patterns to beginners? Obviously not—we must choose one. The *you're not* pattern seems the easier; and the *you aren't* pattern could very well be taught, much later on, when we come to teach the negative question pattern which 'mirrors' it: *aren't you*. There is one objection to this plan—the fact that, in the third person singular, the *he/she/it isn't* form is much commoner than the *he's/she's/it's not* form. In view of all this complexity, the obvious solution is to train the beginner first in the simpler long forms.

In all the examples so far examined, the short forms present a greater number of learning items than the long forms. But more important than the *number* of differing forms is the fact that they are *not different enough*. I shall refer to this problem as 'interference'. When two radio stations are on almost the same wavelength, we get interference—we cannot hear the one clearly because bits of the other keep obtruding themselves on our attention. Similarly, when two language patterns are closely alike in sound or form, there is always the danger that the one will not be clearly apperceived because of 'interference' from the other. The result will be confusion and error, perhaps with both patterns. Thus a leading principle of structure grading is that clearly contrasted patterns should be taught in close connection with each other, whereas closely similar ones should be so widely spaced that one has been thoroughly assimilated before the other is introduced.

Unfortunately, the short forms we are considering seem to give rise to quite a number of cases of 'interference'. Let us look at some of these:

<i>Short form</i>	<i>Similar pattern</i>	<i>Long form</i>
<i>You're coming.</i>	<i>This is your hat.</i>	<i>You are coming.</i>

In most English dialects and in RP there is *no* difference of sound between *your* and *you're*. The beginner will therefore take them to be the same pattern, and will be puzzled by the obviously connected but different meaning. The same applies to the following sets, and in every case the trouble is avoided by the use of the long form:

they're	there	they are
they're	their	they are
who's	whose	who is
it's	its	it is

The following case is closely similar:

he's	his	he is
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Most languages have only one phoneme of the [i] type, whereas English has two, [i:] and [ɪ].

One of the main pronunciation problems, therefore, in the early stages, is to teach this distinction. If we try to teach both *his* and *he's* before this phonemic distinction is well established, the two structures will be confused, and pronounced alike. A general principle may perhaps be stated here: The two most serious types of problem for foreign beginners are structure and pronunciation; these two types must therefore be kept separate whenever possible.

isn't	is it	is not
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The negative and the question form both need to be taught early on. But if the short form of the negative is used, there is again a close similarity of sound. The consonant group [znt] in *isn't*, with its syllabic [n], is unfamiliar to most foreign learners. Confusion is made still easier by the stress pattern *isn't*, the difficult syllable being unstressed. We must bear in mind the fact that English word-stress is quite strange for the beginner, whose mother tongue may have very different word-stress or even none at all. With the long form, on the other hand, the stress is on the differentiating NOT. In the response NO, *it is* NOT, we have the 'chiming' together of the two negatives—a great aid to learning. If we teach this pattern, we are not likely to get errors like *No, it is* or *Yes, it isn't*, which otherwise tend to crop up.

John's a boy.	John's book.	John is a boy.
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Here is another puzzle for the learner, if the short form is used. The possessive structure *John's* is an entirely new language mechanism for most learners. If another totally different structure using exactly the same sound pattern is introduced at this early



stage, confusion is bound to arise. This confusion will be even worse for speakers of Bantu languages and others having few or no close syllables. These learners will in any case tend to separate adjacent English consonants by inserting the so-called 'intrusive' vowel. The vowel they insert will be the same as the one they use in pronouncing the word *a* (whether or not they use the *correct* vowel in the word *a* does not affect the issue).

Thus they will tend to pronounce *Musisi's book* as if it were written *Musisi's a book*. This makes the confusion between the possessive structure and the short form worse confounded. The same process may also occur with *his/he's* and other sets already dealt with.

A different type of confusion may arise where the structure is the same but the sound, for no reason apparent to the beginner, different. This occurs with 's endings, which are sometimes voiced and sometimes unvoiced, depending on the preceding sound:

's = [z]

who's

he's

she's

My name's

's = [s]

what's

it's

A small point, perhaps; but it may be the last straw that breaks the camel's back.

All the examples so far discussed are points of structure, though pronunciation causes them to arise. As regards the purely pronunciation difficulties met by the beginner, these will vary according to his language background. But it is a fact that English consonant clusters are difficult for many learners, and certainly the consonants cluster more thickly around the short forms than around the long ones. So, although the few examples I shall give were heard in classes speaking Luganda, a Bantu language, as their mother tongue, they may have a wider relevance.

[ts] in *what's*

The unexploded [t] in this group is unfamiliar to many learners. The following variants were heard (the phonetic renderings are only approximate): [woks], [wokʃ], [wokis], [wokʃi], [wos]. If [ts] is difficult for the pupils, then [tsm], [tsj] in *what's my, it's your*, &c., are more difficult, and yield a more luxuriant crop of variants.

But the most fiendish of all for Luganda speakers are [tsh] and [tsɔ̃] in *That's his, What's this?*, &c., since [h] and [ɔ̃] do not occur in Luganda. It is sufficiently difficult for the beginner to utter these sounds in open syllables. If we require him to say them in these clusters in his early lessons, he makes noises so surprising that I will not attempt to render them in phonetic symbols.

On grounds of pronunciation alone, then, it would seem that the long forms ought to be taught first, and the short forms with their consonant clusters delayed until the learners have a secure command of the individual sounds of English.

If the short forms are to be postponed, when and how are they eventually to be taught? I do not pretend to know the full answer to this question—indeed, there are probably a number of good alternative answers. I will, however, in conclusion, hazard one or two suggestions towards a solution.

The strange paradox of these short forms is the fact that, although they are only *used* in *conversation*, they are most easily *learned* through *reading*. Their spoken forms can lead to innumerable confusions; their written form at once leaps to the eye with its distinctive apostrophe to remind the learner about the missing letter. Thus there is no structural confusion.

Sometimes, it is true, pupils taught this way continue to use the long forms in speaking. But if particular attention is given to teaching and practising the short forms orally in connection with the reading lessons in which they are introduced, it should be possible to inculcate the new habit. By postponing the difficulty until the pupil learns to read, we are enabled to bring it out into the open. And we often find, in language learning as in psychiatry, that a difficulty brought out into the open and made explicit—at the right moment—is more easily overcome. This again is out of harmony with 'conditioned reflex' views of language learning; but it seems to be borne out by experience.

Short forms involving difficult consonant groups should be taught in conjunction with pronunciation drills on those groups. The *n't* forms might perhaps best be taught when we come to the 'question-tag' structures like *He is, isn't he?* and *You don't go there, do you?* This would not be in the first year of most courses. In general, the short forms should not be introduced until statements, questions and negative statements using the long forms have been thoroughly mastered.

Until I was brought up short by this problem in an actual classroom, I had never realized just how much could depend on such apparently trivial details. I knew in theory the importance of grading structure, but had never before been forced to get down to the really close analysis involved. What I discovered is not new, but it is worth repeating: that, where structure is concerned, no detail is too trivial and no analysis too minute, if the learner's path can be smoothed thereby.



# Bilingualism, or replacement? English in East Africa

G. E. PERREN

Dr West's article *Bilingualism* (*E.L.T.* Vol. XII, No. 3) prompts some observations on the language situation in East Africa and especially in Kenya. In other areas where English has a special position as the official language and where there is no common vernacular for the bulk of the people, matters may be similar.

For convenience it will be as well first to describe the existing situation in Kenya under racial divisions, as separate schools are provided there for Africans, Asians and Europeans. The estimated African population is nearly six million speaking over 40 recognizably different languages, all of which would require an individual written form if all were written. About ten of these languages are of sufficient importance to warrant the production of reading material in print beyond elementary primers, but only Swahili can claim to have anything approaching a literature of its own. With the exception of Swahili none of the African languages has any place in secondary schools either as a medium of instruction or as a subject for study. In African primary schools, which contain about 500,000 pupils, the local vernacular is the normal medium of instruction during the first four or five years, after which it gives place to English which becomes the language of all education above the primary level.

The Asian population in Kenya amounts to approximately 162,000, located chiefly in the towns. The major Asian vernaculars are Gujerati, Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi in varying proportions. To provide a common teaching medium, the normal policy in Asian schools has been to stream children according to their vernacular during the first four years. English has normally been begun in the first year and becomes the common medium of instruction in the fifth year<sup>1</sup>. Beyond that and throughout secondary schools English is the sole medium, although the major vernaculars are still studied as subjects.

The European population amounts to about 63,000 and is in the main English-speaking. There is however a large number of children who come from non-English speaking homes. Some years ago it was estimated that up to 20 per cent of the children in one of the largest secondary schools for Europeans did not speak English as their normal language at home. It is unlikely that this proportion

<sup>1</sup>With the important exceptions noted below.

has decreased very much. All European schools use the English medium throughout.

The position and history of Swahili in education deserves a note to itself. For many years it was used and encouraged as the *lingua franca* in Kenya, not only between different African tribes, but also between different races. It was taught in African schools (but never in Asian or European schools) as a second language and extensively used below the secondary level as a medium of instruction. Nowadays it is no longer taught extensively in African primary schools, is seldom used as a medium of instruction, but is often studied as a subject for examination purposes in secondary schools. In spite of having little place in education, Swahili is still widely used in a debased and very limited form for immediate oral communication, and there are a considerable number of publications in the language—far more than in any of the other East African vernaculars. The demand for written material in Swahili can be partly explained by the close relation of this language to most of the other Bantu vernaculars and the consequent ease by which reading ability in one of these may be transferred into Swahili. Swahili is the true mother-tongue of only a very small proportion of the African population.

Generally English is the language of public affairs in the towns or in any matter beyond local importance. Not only is it the official language of legislation, law and political debate, but it is the principal language of business and commerce in any but small self-contained groups. All secondary education—African, Asian and European—follows much the same curriculum, and pupils of all races take the same examination—the Cambridge Oversea School Certificate—in English. In a society composed of many different races, tribes and communities the English language is thus a major integrating force, which arises from the practical needs of communication in education and economic and social intercourse rather than from common cultural aims. Not only is any African, Asian or European ineligible for a well-paid job without real practical facility in English, but he is unable to get the education which will qualify him for it except through the medium of English.

At present in African and in Asian schools there is a movement to begin learning English progressively earlier in response to popular demand. In most African primary schools pupils have a common vernacular and there is no immediate need for English as a medium. Nevertheless there is considerable demand to begin English as a second language in the first year. Many schools do begin it in the second year: the majority begin it in the third year.

In Asian education, particularly in the large towns, the mixture of vernaculars among both pupils and teachers raises special



problems in the primary schools. For some years these have led to efforts to use English as a medium of instruction as early as possible—even in the first year. At present a large-scale experiment involving over 2,000 children is being carried out in Nairobi Asian schools in using English as the sole medium of instruction from the start of school at 5½ years of age. This has required the planning of an integrated teaching programme in which language learning is fully co-ordinated with the other activities and skills proper to the infant classroom. There is no space to go into details here, but the project rests on the assumption that language-learning at an early age can be a natural and easy process provided that it is entirely related to a child's needs, interests and activities rather than to conventional adult concepts of language learning. So far this project seems very successful. It has led to very considerable modifications of orthodox language teaching techniques to conform with infant needs. In these 'English-streams' the teaching of reading and writing in English follows the same progression as it would in the mother-tongue and appears to be possible at about the same age.

From this outline it will be seen that the position of English, both in society and in education is unlike that ascribed to Dr West's 'Ex Language', or that in countries where it is learned as a conventional second language. In Kenya it is not merely an examination subject or a cultural additive to society, it is the very material of education and of full participation in social life. Outside the classroom or at home most children continue to speak their own vernacular, but the issue of whether bilingualism is a disadvantage or not hardly arises—it is a necessity which cannot be avoided. It is possible that those who begin English late at school or who are less gifted than others at language learning may be handicapped. But any handicap at school is only a prelude to the handicap which will face them in adult life after school. This is an inevitable consequence of living in a society which has no common indigenous language and must therefore learn a new one if it is to secure a common form of social behaviour for common ends.

This need for English is generally accepted by public opinion of all sorts. Although there may be some discussion about the precise level at which English should be begun or the methods of teaching to be used, no-one questions its desirability or necessity as the language of secondary education or social development. Discussion is at the technical rather than the policy level. English in Kenya, and indeed throughout East Africa, where the same need applies generally in all territories, cannot be described accurately as a *second* language: at some stage it inevitably becomes the first. Educationally there are potent arguments for putting this stage as

early as possible in school life, not the least being that it seems best to switch to a new medium before children have to learn subjects with a heavy content-load. The psychological tensions arising from a realization of the need to know English are perhaps more easily resolved if pupils begin to learn in English long before secondary school examinations bulk large on the horizon. For want of a better term, English in East Africa can be called a 'replacement language'. For educational, social, economic and political purposes it has to replace the many vernaculars which, apart from imposing an impossible number of divisions on society, do not provide for its future development.

Dr West's criticism of bilingualism can hardly apply to East Africa. It is not quite the evil that he suggests it inevitably must be. It is a necessary means of social development. Possibly because this is widely understood by the general public, certain psychological barriers to learning a 'foreign' language common elsewhere do not exist. As Dr West says, 'The all important factor in language learning is motive'. Thus the reverse of the measures he advocates to mitigate the evils of bilingualism need to be used in East Africa to extend its advantages:

1. Since all must learn English, it is best for children to begin at an age when it is easiest and when there is no pronounced language-learning differential (apart from that imposed by general intelligence variations). This seems to be as soon as possible.
2. Because English is to become a common means of social behaviour for different races and communities, it should *not* be specialized in its function and should include the widest possible interests—including the home. The ability to speak is essential, and if this includes hearing and understanding as well, it is of even more importance than reading, because English is the medium of teaching. Reading skill must of course follow as in education through a mother-tongue.
3. The first stage of language-learning should indeed be concentrated, but real practical mastery of language as a social instrument demands a progressive increase in its use as the learner moves up the school. If English is used as a medium of instruction, progressive learning of the language becomes completely involved with its practical use. Any distinction between learning a language and using it is quite artificial. If the basic function of language is communication, then its learning is unlikely to be prejudiced by false assumptions of its cultural value or its use 'as a mistaken form of propaganda'.



The force of Dr West's arguments seem clear enough in an area where his 'Ex Language' is an extra—unnecessary to the individual to earn a good living or to secure full membership of an emergent society. They apply, it is suggested, to a country where bilingualism is not really necessary but may be imposed against public opinion. Intentionally perhaps, he has begged the question: true bilingualism is usually the result of social necessity which cannot be avoided. In East Africa it appears fruitless to argue whether it is good or bad in itself; the problem is how to achieve it most efficiently.

## The Teaching of the English Language to First and Second Year University Students<sup>1</sup>

RUDOLF FILIPOVIĆ

### I. BACKGROUND

Before discussing methods of teaching English in universities it is necessary to point out two things: (1) We are dealing here with the problem of how to teach English in universities where English is the *second* language; (2) We are taking into consideration the circumstances under which English is taught in secondary schools. In other words, we shall be explaining ways in which English can be taught at university level in countries where the background is similar to that found in Yugoslavia.

The course of studies for a university degree in English lasts four years. The students take two subjects: one is the main subject and is studied for four years, the other is the principal subsidiary subject and is studied for three years. English can be taken either as the

<sup>1</sup>This article is based on the experience of the Department of English and the Institute of Phonetics of the University of Zagreb and on experiments conducted by them. My intention is not to announce any new achievement of research in methodology, but to report on work done and results achieved. My special intention is to show how far audio-visual aids can be used and with what results.

Having been in charge of the English language teaching both in the English Department and in the language laboratory of the Institute of Phonetics of Zagreb University for several years (since 1950) I have been interested in methods of teaching English at university level and in its practical aspect in both language classes and classes in applied phonetics, so-called pronunciation classes.

main subject or as the principal subsidiary subject. The difference between the two is to be found more in the study of the literature than in the study of the language. As the purpose of either course is the mastery of modern English, no distinction will be made in this article between the two courses.

One further point should be made clear, i.e. the way in which Croat students join the university and what their degree of knowledge is at the time of joining. In Yugoslavia English is taught in secondary schools in an 8-year course and a 4-year course. University students of English are recruited from both, which means that some of them have learnt English for four and some for eight years. There is no entrance examination. So the first year is partly a preparatory year, consisting of an introductory course. Selection is made at the end of the first year by means of a written and oral examination. This cuts out a number of students who either did not bring with them, or do not succeed in gaining, the necessary working knowledge of English.

At the end of the second year there is another examination, written and oral, which qualifies students to join the seminars, literary and linguistic, for which they need a very good working knowledge of English, since all the work is carried on in English: essays are written in English and discussed in English at seminar sessions.

## II. METHOD

We have based our method partly on certain fundamental principles of the classical method of teaching foreign languages as practised in universities before the war. We have kept to the traditional way of lecturing on the subject and holding seminars for which the students write and read their essays. A high academic level of discussion on the linguistic or literary problems the students write about is aimed at. But these seminars do not offer much opportunity for practical instruction in the language unless the essays are written and the discussion carried on in English.

Our first aim in building up a new method of teaching English at university level has been to provide language and pronunciation classes which would offer the students the opportunity to master spoken English and achieve a good pronunciation in a short time. We have also followed certain modern trends in the teaching of foreign languages and have applied the new principles in our method.

Immediately after World War II audio-visual material was recognized as an indispensable component of instructional material. It has been used at all levels ranging from elementary to university level, but at the latter least of all. Yet there are various ways in



which it is possible to apply audio-visual aids to the teaching of foreign languages, including English, at universities. In the course of some years' experiment we have accepted them and incorporated them in our method.

We should like to add here, and emphasize very strongly, that it would be wrong to think that audio-visual aids should displace good instructional techniques or replace the teacher in the classroom. On the contrary, we consider them as *aids* only, used to supplement the personality and the teaching skill of the teacher. We have always considered that the best conditions for teaching English are created when a good, experienced 'lektor', good audio-visual devices, and good texts are brought together.

We have therefore based and developed our method of teaching English on audio-visual principles. We have used nearly all the audio-visual aids: pictures, photographs, diagrams, slides, filmstrips and films; gramophone records, tape recordings, radio; and sound-films.

In quite a number of universities where English is taught as a foreign language there is still a basic problem to be solved, namely: what is to be done with those students who join the English department without a sound working knowledge of the English language. Very often the student's knowledge is not enough for him to follow university courses given in English or to study the subject properly. Apart from the regular academic courses in the English language, covering modern English grammar, historical grammar and the history of English, and in addition some seminars on these subjects, a number of classes are, therefore, specially provided to enable students to master the practical side of the language, and to give them a thorough knowledge of how to speak and write English. Such classes run parallel with the academic courses; the latter very often supplement the former.

While, for instance, in a four-year course of modern English grammar students attend lectures in which grammatical problems are discussed from the point of view of descriptive grammar and explanations are based on general linguistics and on historical and comparative grammar with reference to the mother-tongue (Croatian), in the practical language classes the 'lektors' stick to prescriptively correct English'. All the material for grammatical drills seminars of the third and the fourth years are intended to introduce the students to the linguistic analysis of recent works of English literature and to deal with grammatical features from a more theoretical viewpoint.

The same distinction may be seen in the teaching of English phonetics. This is also dealt with in two parallel courses: (1) a two-year course in descriptive phonetics consisting of general introductory lectures, lectures on English sounds (in which these are described and compared with the students' native sounds), and lectures on stress, rhythm and intonation; (2) a course of corrective phonetics consisting of group work designed to eliminate the students' defects of pronunciation.

To sum up: our method of teaching the English language at university level has three main components: (i) academic lectures; (ii) practical language classes; (iii) classes concerned with phonetic exercises. We shall now deal with the second and third components only, as they form the basis of the practical language teaching.

### III. LANGUAGE CLASSES

To co-ordinate the 'lektors' work in language classes, a 'Plan of Work for Language Classes for Students during the First Three Years' has been compiled by the Department. It is experimental and can be changed and improved every term if the work in language classes has brought up any new problem or has suggested improvements.

The number of lessons a week is limited to three of 45 minutes (although we should like and hope to be able very soon to introduce a fourth), which makes from 75-80 lessons a year. Language classes are taken by 'lektors'; four of them are English, two full-time and two part-time (the British Council lecturers); the rest are natives whose mother tongue is Croatian. The work has been distributed among the 'lektors' in the following way: the first-year language classes are taken only by Croat 'lektors', the second-year classes by both English and Croat 'lektors'; in the third year, however, the language teaching is carried on by English 'lektors' only. This distribution is based on the following considerations: Croat 'lektors' can deal with and understand the first-year students' difficulties better, as they are primarily based on grammar and syntax and such students are still influenced by their native tongue and speak what may be called 'Croatian in English words', i.e. translating Croatian phrases into English instead of replacing them by English equivalents.

In the second-year classes more time (2 : 1) is given to the English 'lektors', as they place more emphasis upon colloquial and living English. By this time we hope that we have eradicated completely the reading approach made in secondary school teaching, i.e. visual orientation and the neglect of the spoken form, neglect of aural orientation. As early as the first year we try to replace the student's visual orientation by an aural one. In the second year, I believe,

this process is already complete and students have become used to the sounds and intonation of the language as spoken by an ordinary English voice at a reasonable conversational speed. They have also by that time been given much help to this purpose in phonetics classes (see the section on these classes). The English 'lektors' classes are intended to be oral rather than academic, but ordinary grammatical mistakes are automatically corrected and discussed through the written exercises. The Croat 'lektors' pay more attention to formal instruction in grammar, following the plan of work, as they can more easily understand the particular difficulties in syntax that are likely to appear. But this work done by the Croat 'lektors' has also the same aim, i.e. to help students to acquire a flow of conversational phrases. It is essential from our point of view that the third-year classes should be taken by English 'lektors' only, as the aim of these classes is to enable students to use English in normal situations.

**First-Year Language Classes.** *The aims* of the first year are to revise and perfect the material that has been covered in secondary schools. This is very important, for unless students gain a thorough familiarity early on with the basic rules of English grammar they get into the habit of making mistakes which are extremely difficult to eradicate later. The first-year students must, therefore, make themselves familiar with an elementary prescriptive grammar.

*Type of lesson.* We distinguish between three main types of lesson in the first year, grammar lessons, written work, and lessons of a freer type. The actual arrangement of the lessons may be left to the discretion of the 'lektor' and will also vary in certain groups according to the students' previous knowledge. The aim, in first-year language classes, is that the number of grammar lessons should not be less than 60 per cent and the amount of written work not less than 15 per cent, the rest of the time being spent on lessons of a freer type. But 'lektors' need not keep exactly to these proportions. If a grammatical point has not been grasped in one lesson, then a second lesson may be devoted to it. A general rule during the first year should be that students need more practice in grammar than in free expression. For this reason the number of freer types of lesson has been smaller than that of grammatical lessons. The grammatical material to which special attention is given in the first-year language classes has been carefully chosen from the viewpoint of the difficulties it presents to Croat students in the speaking and writing of English. Stress is laid on a thorough mastery of those grammatical units which are used differently in English and Croatian. They are dealt with in proper exercises. Similar careful treatment is given to some other points which can also cause difficulties, their



use being different from the equivalent constructions in Croatian. Other grammatical points need not have special grammar lessons devoted to them, as they are covered in other lessons and constant attention has been given to their correct use.

Various textbooks are used in grammar lessons: explanations are taken from Filipović's *Outline of English Grammar* and practice is provided by W. S. Allen's *Living English Structure*, Dixon's *Graded Exercises*, *Exercises* provided by the English Department, and any other exercises which 'lektors' may find useful.

When students have grasped a grammatical point it is important for the 'lektor' to liberate himself from the various books of graded exercises, however excellent these may be. Very often students can cope with a grammatical rule in a semi-automatic manner after a number of exercises, but are unable to apply the grammar they have learned to a simple situation. 'Lektors' should, therefore, devise ways and means by which their students can apply grammatical rules in the most natural way possible. Certain audio-visual devices can be used here very successfully. A picture or a slide can be shown and the students asked to construct sentences about it to illustrate the point they are studying.

The film strip is very widely used too. It is used, to begin with, in the correction of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

The spelling group utilizes cartoon figures, the grammar group presents each topic through a story device, and the vocabulary group also uses story devices with dialogue, which greatly enhances the teaching value of the strip. Another group of film-strips is used to enrich the student's vocabulary and another to practise the use of verbal tenses (especially the present continuous and the past continuous). Some conversational film-strips have been used very profitably to practise all verbal forms and enlarge the vocabulary. They can be used with or without sound.

*Written work.* The type of written work given in the first year can take various forms and it will often be advisable to combine two different types of written work in one lesson. Dictation can take three different forms: straight dictation, précis dictation, and dictation for adjective practice. Free composition must not be too free in this year; it should be based on the description of simple objects or actions, or on a story provided by the teacher. Translation can also take several forms: translation of easy sentences into English, translation of fairly difficult passages into Croatian, and translation into Croatian of English sentences in which misunderstandings easily arise. Other types of written work include: vocabulary practice—students are asked to write sentences containing a particular word, its synonyms and antonyms; comprehension tests: a short episode

is read and students then describe it in their own words; description in reported speech of episodes given in direct speech, or vice versa; exercises based on pictures: students are shown a picture and asked to write a number of sentences about it in the passive, to describe actions in the picture, to form sentences using certain tenses; &c., &c.

Written work in connection with grammar lessons is given in class and also completed there. The 'lektor', however, may correct it at home. After correcting the written work the 'lektor' sees the students individually and returns it to them. This enables the 'lektors' to gain a closer knowledge of their students, and helps the students to feel that a more individual interest is being taken in their work.

Various other methods of correcting students' mistakes are used in first-year classes. Some 'lektors' group the mistakes made in a dictation in a list and if they are of general interest discuss them, explain them, and even note them on the blackboard. Translations are corrected at home and discussed in class, students being encouraged to comment on the mistakes of anonymous fellow-students, suggesting alternatives, and finally the 'lektor' gives his own version of the translation. This is often a good opportunity to make the students talk. They are very keen on giving their own reasons and explanations.

Sometimes the whole class takes part in correction of the dictation or of the translation of sentences from Croatian into English. This takes rather a long time but it has proved to be interesting and it engages the students' full attention. The written work is done at the same time on the blackboard, and after each sentence the class is asked to comment upon it and correct it if necessary.

*The freer lesson.* The freer lessons can be based on the use of simple or simplified texts. The work in these lessons is not based on the mastery of any particular grammatical point, but practice may be given in all grammatical points as they arise. These lessons will also give students practice in reading connected sentences and help them to enlarge their vocabulary for everyday things. Attention is, of course, also given to accent and intonation, though these should not be too precisely insisted on, as there are regular classes in phonetics in which exercises in pronunciation are specially provided.

After reading texts, students question each other. If necessary, the 'lektor' helps them out by suggesting questions to them in Croatian when they cannot think of a question or when the questions become dull or too simple.

In this type of lesson audio-visual aids are very extensively used. A lesson of freer type can be based on a wall-picture, slides, or a film-strip, and even on a short film. They are very useful substitutes for texts, enliven the work, and get students thinking independently

along new lines. It makes lessons more interesting if as many different techniques as possible are used.

**Second-Year Language Classes.** *The aims* of the second-year classes are different from those of the first year. The lessons are freer, the students get more practice in fluent speech, and less rigid attention is paid to grammar. Great attention, however, should still be paid to grammatical mistakes and mistakes of construction. Work is adapted to the level of the group and if the group is weak it will be varied accordingly. In general, the emphasis in the second year is on more active knowledge. The arrangement of the lessons will consequently be such as to favour lessons of a freer type. The amount of grammatical instruction will be much smaller than in the first year: not more than 40 per cent; written work will cover about 15 per cent of the instruction given, and instruction of a freer type will make up about 45 per cent.

In the second year, after the previous year's material has been carefully revised, more advanced grammatical material is covered. More complex aspects of verbal tenses, including imaginative ones, are discussed and practised. The infinitive, the gerund, and the present participle are given special attention, both in theory and practice. The use of the passive voice and special cases of the use of the article are dealt with in regular grammar lessons, as they seem to give serious difficulty to Croat students. More advanced discussion of relative clauses, of indirect questions, and of the place and use of adverbs and prepositions can take place in the freer type of lesson.

The type of work suggested for the first year can also be used here, but more difficult exercises from the books of graded exercises can be taken. Even more care is taken this year to use as many types of exercises as the 'lektor's' imagination can supply. In addition, more attention is given to idioms, learned from a book of idioms and applied to imaginary situations. But here the 'lektor' should be careful not to allow the students to learn idioms formally and mechanically.

*Written work.* All types of written work for the first year can be used this year at a higher level. In addition, freer forms of composition, including letter-writing, précis, and the comparison game as a written exercise, can be used.

In dictation attention is specially directed to phonetic rather than orthographic aspects. Dictations are corrected immediately after they are given, and each student corrects his own. The object of this is not to trace the number of mistakes but to make sure that the student sees what he or she has done wrong while the text is still in his mind.



Various forms of *précis* are used: (1) The text is given in written form and a *précis* is written in class and corrected by the 'lektor'. A solution is read to the class afterwards and the main mistakes discussed. (2) The text is not given to the students in written form. It is read aloud to them three times and they are asked to write out the gist of it from memory. In some *précis* exercises special attention is directed to one grammatical point (e.g. to the passive verb if the majority of the verbs in the passage are in the passive voice). (3) A Croatian text is read out sentence by sentence and translated into colloquial English round the class. After this, the class is told to write out the conversation as accurately as possible from memory. Attention is also drawn to the proper use of punctuation in English. (4) A verse text in colloquial English is dictated to the class, and the students are then asked to write it out as a prose version. In all these cases the work is corrected by the teacher and the differences in style are carefully pointed out.

We think that translation into English is above all necessary for accuracy in learning English. It is also useful inasmuch as many of our students will have to use it for the practical purpose of making translations. The value of translation, however, depends to a large extent on the degree of general fluency which the students already possess. As the greater part of our students are already comparatively fluent, more attention can be given to accuracy. Of course, this does not apply to first-year students. Texts for translation into English have been chosen on the same general principles as English texts for study—they should be as far as possible in average and concrete language.

But special attention is paid to ensuring that translation never becomes a mechanical drill, but is used to illustrate the general principles of the English language.

Translation texts are written in class and corrected by the 'lektor'. Mistakes are discussed individually in some cases and collectively in others. If an exercise proves to have been specially difficult, however, the corrected papers are returned individually to each student, either in class (while the class as a whole is doing some other exercise), or later during consultation hours, with some comment on the mistakes made.

Very often the 'lektors' comment to the whole class on any special mistakes they have noticed, without revealing which students are responsible for them. At the same time they comment on any mistakes they may have discovered in more than one exercise, indicating that certain linguistic bad habits have still to be eradicated. One of our 'lektors' has noticed that students listen to such comments and explanations attentively, since it appears that other people's

mistakes are always more interesting than one's own.

*Work suggested for the freer type of lesson.* Lessons in the second year are based on normal, unadapted texts, not on simplified texts. Here again students are still encouraged to question each other, the 'lektor' only supplying a question when the class gets to a dull point. (This type of exercise has often been used because it has been found that students who are fairly fluent speakers still find it difficult to formulate a question properly in a somewhat more complex situation.)

*The study of texts—interpretation of texts.* We are very much in favour of, and very often use, cyclostyled copies, because they are perhaps the best method of presentation. The study of a single book for language purposes does not afford enough variety. Anthologies are seldom the answer either since they are nearly always chosen with some other end in view than that of the given lecturer facing the given class. The choice of text, in any case, requires great care. It must not be too literary, it must not be too demotic either. Twentieth century action narrative provides the best kind of text, with minor adaptations at this stage. These, however, do not amount to 'simplifications'.

Special efforts have been made to get the students to apply the language of the texts to their own experience. This approach has been quite successful and has encouraged conversation in class. If, for instance, the text deals with farming, the question should be raised whether farming is carried on in the same way in the part of the country the student comes from. If houses are discussed, one can talk about different types of houses found in different parts of the country. If the text concerns travel the students can be questioned about their own experiences, &c.

Audio-visual aids find their place in this type of work and, indeed, seem to be even more applicable. The General Service Wall Pictures<sup>1</sup> play an important part in the freer lessons of the second year. The notes on the use of these pictures are so excellent and suggest so many different, more interesting, and more imaginative ways of teaching that they are a boon to all teachers. They also suggest ways in which other visual aids may be used. Film-strips are quite often used: they are very useful for vocabulary practice and for the spontaneous use of English. They stimulate conversation and are considered very attractive material. They can also be used for the practice of grammatical structures, especially tenses. Film-strips supply good material for the practice among other things of the use of the perfect tense followed by the present continuous (e.g.

<sup>1</sup>Gatenby, E. V. & Eckersley, C. E.: *General Service English Wall Pictures*. London, Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd.

*Father has come home and now the family are sitting down to lunch).*

Although it is considered that a language is mainly learnt in conversation, some of our 'lektors' believe that the conversation class cannot work with 1st and 2nd year students for various reasons. We have made several attempts to enhance the value of conversation in our second-year language classes and some audio-visual aids have been used quite successfully. If we want our students to improve their fluency and accuracy we must make them speak in the classroom and to do so we must have something to speak about. This can well be a common experience of the students, so that each will have the same basic ideas to discuss. The showing of a film to all students provides that common experience. Of course, the film must be one that stimulates discussion.

It is the experience of some of our 'lektors' that (1) students who do not ordinarily participate in the discussion of literature take more interest in the discussion of a film; (2) a film brings more students into the discussion and always proves lively and interesting; (3) some students make a more complete response to a film than to printed material.

Of course, we use many other ways of making our students talk. Conversation games have been very popular in second-year classes: Twenty Questions, the 'Reminding' Game, the Comparison Game, &c.

#### IV. 'PHONETIC EXERCISES

The first object of these classes is to enable students to acquire a correct pronunciation. This is achieved by specially composed practical phonetic drills. The practical phonetic classes follow the lectures on theory. They are arranged in such a way that after each lecture students have a practical class in which they drill the subject discussed theoretically in the lecture. This applies to the discussion of English sounds, rhythm, and intonation.

In the course of the first year all the vowels and a few consonants are discussed; in the second year, the rest of the consonants are practised, and rhythm and intonation are carefully dealt with. Later on, before they sit for their final examination, students have another practical revision course in pronunciation before they leave the university.

Practical work in the first two years is based on theory, both courses having the same aim in view, namely, to help the student to master English sounds and pronunciation. The sound is first described and then compared to its equivalent in Croatian (if there is one) and similarities and dissimilarities are pointed out. Then follow practical hints which should help the student to master the



sound with the least possible effort, always starting from the nearest Croatian sound. The material used for both theory and practical work in sounds is taken from 'English Pronunciation' by R. Filipović, especially written for students of English whose mother tongue is Croatian.

In the pronunciation exercises, the phonetic drill proceeds as follows: (1) the vowel is pronounced in isolation several times, short and long; (2) the vowel is drilled in three positions: (a) when it is followed by a voiced consonant, making the vowel longer; (b) when it is followed by a voiceless consonant and (c), if possible, when it is final and comparatively long; (3) the same vowel is drilled later on in words of two or more syllables, the drill always aiming at the same accuracy as before; (4) very useful exercises are those in which pairs of words differing only in the root vowel are pronounced. They can be extended to three and four words as, for instance, in i: — i — e — æ (bi:d, bid, bed, bæd), but the order of practice may be changed. (5) The next stage consists of sentences for practice in which there are the maximum number of words containing the sound that is being drilled. Here we sometimes use short poems or nursery rhymes which are also suitable material for practising English rhythm. (6) At the end there is a prose passage in which the sound that is practised is found in its natural context. This exercise should aim at fluent reading and the correct pronunciation of at least those sounds that have already been practised.

When consonants are drilled, the exercises comprise examples in which the consonant is found in the three positions, i.e. initial, medial and final.

Phonetic drill is carried out by repeating the sound individually or in chorus. The latter breaks the monotony of the drill and keeps students alert, as after a certain time phonetic drill may easily become monotonous.

For the same reason, at the end of each chapter, sentences for practice and prose passages are analysed from the point of view of rhythm and the two elementary tones—falling and rising. At the same time it is possible to draw students' attention to some other elements of fluent reading and speaking, as for instance: sense groups, sentence stress, juncture, &c. Naturally, this is done only by the way, as a detailed analysis of fluent speech is planned for the second-year classes.

The 'lektor' often helps students by drawing attention to theoretical points explained in the lecture, e.g. the place and manner of articulation of a sound and its relation to the Croatian equivalent.

Special attention is given to practical exercises in English rhythm and intonation. The material for this drill is supplied by W. S.

Allen's book 'Living English Speech' and R. Filipović's handbook 'The English Language—Pronunciation and Intonation'. But other exercises on records and tapes are used if they illustrate the feature of English rhythm or intonation under study.

In this work all possible audio-visual aids are used, from diagrams, drawings, and pictures to speech records and tape-recorders with specially prepared tapes.

Pronunciation drill passes through several stages. The first is the identification of the sound by means of ear training. We follow the principle that unless a sound is properly identified it cannot be properly imitated. In the second stage, the sound is repeated in the pause allowed after the speaker on the record or tape. This drill should bring students' pronunciation as closely to the original as possible. How far they have succeeded in imitating the sound is checked by recording their pronunciation on the tape-recorder. This is of great value because it gives the student an opportunity of identifying his own mistakes and deviations from the pronunciation recommended on the record or tape.

The further we go in the drill the more important it is to use audio-visual devices. Records and tapes are also invaluable for exercises in English rhythm and intonation. Naturally, much better results have been achieved later, in the revision course in the language laboratory, where every student practises individually on a tape-recorder and so is able to spend as much time on one sound or any other point of pronunciation as he finds necessary.

Another form of phonetic exercise which is not (and never should be) neglected is practice in transcription. While transcribing whole sentences or even shorter passages, students are asked to pay special attention to sentence stress, and consequently to weak forms which occur as its immediate result. Sometimes attempts are also made to introduce the system of marking the intonation patterns of certain sentences and shorter passages. So far this has proved useful, as it gives the student material to practise at home.

The Institute of Phonetics has provided a set of eleven gramophone records entitled 'How English is Pronounced and Recited'. These records supply phonetic exercises on English sounds, rhythm, and intonation as well as fluently-read passages to be imitated. They have been used in addition to other much more advanced material recorded on the tapes for students' work in the language laboratory.

In the revision course, which is held only in the language laboratory, more individual treatment is given. The method is based entirely on the tape and tape-recorder directed by the 'lektor'. The student is drilled in pronunciation again, following very closely the three stages previously mentioned: ear training, corrective exercises

by imitating the recorded material on the tape, and recording the student's pronunciation for checking and correction if necessary.

The imitative exercise is very carefully controlled by the 'lektor' and it goes on as long as the 'lektor' considers necessary. Very close control by the 'lektor' is essential, as without this the drill may go astray and do more harm than good. The importance of the 'lektor's' active presence in the language laboratory cannot be too strongly emphasized, especially at the later stage when rhythm and intonation are practised.

Finally, the student listens to connected passages and tries to identify all the characteristics of fluent reading. Here again the imitative exercise can be used and the student's fluency checked. Then another recording is made, as a final check on the student's pronunciation. It enables the student to compare his own pronunciation with that of the native speaker and eventually to identify the differences which have to be eliminated. But it also enables the 'lektor' to analyse the student's pronunciation as a whole and give him some final hints if necessary.

The results of such work have been more than satisfactory, and well repay the expenditure of so much time and effort. We are convinced that without audio-visual aids the work done on pronunciation drill would be less successful and much less interesting.

#### V. CONCLUSION

It would be unjust if in conclusion a well-deserved tribute were not paid to audio-visual aids for their part in our method and work. Although we have already pointed out their importance throughout our discussion, it is necessary to stress their importance to universities. Often they are not used enough at university level. It depends on the skill and the particular approach of the 'lektor' whether he uses one or other audio-visual device. The more we use them the more benefit they offer. In good premises, and with a satisfactory number of 'lektors', audio-visual aids could be used even more widely and successfully.

I do not know whether we have exhausted all the means of teaching English at university level in the first two years. We have tried to adapt our teaching to modern trends in education and to improve our methods by using all the audio-visual devices obtainable. No doubt there are other ways and means that might be applied.



## Correspondence

We are interested in our readers' ideas and views, and correspondence on articles and other matters is cordially invited, although no guarantee of publication can be given. Please keep to the point and avoid long-windedness.

### The Question Box

Conducted by F. T. WOOD and P. A. D. MACCARTHY

QUESTION. I am seeking your assistance on a point connected with the adverbial use of *no*. After explaining to students that *no* is usually an adjective and that it could only be used adverbially after *or* (whether or no) and with comparative adjectives and adverbs, I drew attention to what I then thought was a unique use of the word with an adjective of the positive degree, namely *no good*, as in the sentences *That idea is no good*, *It's no good counting on his help*. This, I said, was the only example of such usage; it is impossible to say *That is no bad*, *This is no pleasant*, &c. Then one day I found myself writing 'the position is no different now'. This, of course, is perfectly good English, but it contradicts my former 'rule' about the uniqueness of *no good*. What I am now wondering is, how many examples of a similar usage I have missed, and whether they are more numerous than I had supposed. Can you be of any assistance?

ANSWER. The cases of *no good* and *no different* are not really parallel. Although we undoubtedly feel the expression *no good* to have an adjectival sense roughly equivalent to *useless*, *pointless*, *unavailing*, &c., from a historical point of view *good* is a noun with the meaning of *advantage* and *no* an adjective. (See the Oxford Dictionary under *good*, *sb.*, and Jespersen, *Modern English Grammar*, Vol. II, 16.781.) So you are not really right in saying that *no good* is a unique, or even an exceptional, example of adverbial *no* before an adjective of the positive degree. It is rather on a par with *no use*, which also is felt to be adjectival in force though *use* is a noun (e.g. *It's no use crying over spilt milk*). Incidentally it is rather surprising to find that the earliest example of *no good* quoted by the Oxford Dictionary is dated as recently as 1842, from the writings of Cardinal Newman.

The only examples of adverbial *no* used with a positive degree that I can think of are the one which you quote (namely, *no different*) and its adverbial counterpart *no differently* (*one person will be treated no differently from another*); but these should really be grouped with the comparatives, since *different*, though grammatically of the positive degree, by its meaning implies a comparison or contrast.

QUESTION. How is it that we can say *no good food*, *no suitable clothes*, &c. but must say *not enough food*, *not much food*, *not many clothes*? This is a point which continually puzzles African pupils, since both *no* and *not* stand before an adjective.

ANSWER. In your first two examples the negative word refers to the noun (no food that is good, no clothes that are suitable), hence it must be adjectival; in the rest it refers to the adjective, so the adverb *not* must be used. In the sentence *No two people think alike* we have what at first sight appears to be a case of *no* modifying an adjective, but in such a construction *two people* is thought of as a kind of compound noun signifying a group, and it is the complete idea that the negative word modifies, not merely the numeral adjective.

QUESTION. In Zandvoort's *Handbook of English Grammar* (p. 19 of the mono-lingual edition) it is stated that the passive voice of the verbs *to hear, to see, to feel, &c.*, should be followed by the infinitive, as 'The ship was seen to heel to starboard', while in another grammar book I find the example 'She was heard to sing'. I had always thought that the correct construction was 'She was heard singing', &c. Am I wrong, or is this construction also possible, and if so what is the difference of meaning between the two?

ANSWER. The sentence you quote from Zandvoort is given, with others, as an example of what the author calls 'the nominative with infinitive', so naturally no examples of the construction with the participle are given. Where such a construction is possible (which is by no means always the case), the difference is two-fold. First, the infinitive comprises the whole of the activity or occurrence, from beginning to end, whereas the participle represents the idea of an activity or an occurrence in progress, though not necessarily in its entirety. Thus *He was seen to cross the road* comprises the whole of his passage, from his leaving one pavement to his arriving on the opposite one. But *He was seen crossing the road* merely suggests the activity in course of performance. (Compare the use of the participle in the progressive tenses.) Secondly, the subject of the finite verb is also a kind of subject to the infinitive; what was seen was a particular activity performed by a particular person. The participle, on the other hand, is adjectival; what was seen was a person in a particular situation—on his way across the road.

From this it follows that though with some verbs either construction is possible, according to the idea that is to be expressed, for some also one or the other is precluded. For instance, we should say *He was seen sleeping by the roadside*. *He was seen to sleep by the roadside* would be impossible. On the other hand, with a verb denoting a momentary occurrence which we can scarcely see in progress, the participle is often ruled out and only the infinitive is possible: e.g. *The aeroplane was seen to burst into flames, The car was seen suddenly to swerve*. When the participle of such verbs is used it generally suggests repetition: e.g. *A door was heard to slam* (a single occurrence), *A door was heard slamming* (repeatedly). Occasionally it may represent a continuing position or situation resulting from the action denoted by the infinitive: e.g. *He was seen to sit on the seat/to lie down on the grass, He was seen sitting on the seat/lying down on the grass*.

QUESTION. I know that *if* is often used in the sense of *whether*, as in such a sentence as *Ask them if they can come to dinner on Thursday*. But can the two words be interchanged without restriction, or is there any idiomatic usage that has to be taken into account? According to the C.O.D. the verbs *ask, see* and *try* take *if*; but is *whether* also possible? Again, the C.O.D. has 'Whether he is here or in London'; could *if* be substituted?

In the following sentences are both *if* and *whether* correct? 'They want to control if/whether the Russians really stop their tests'. 'I wonder whether/if he'll come.'

ANSWER. Since you ask whether the two words can be interchanged 'without restriction', it should be stated in the first place that such interchange as is

possible is restricted to clauses; *if* can never be used in an infinitive construction. We can say 'I wonder whether we should invite Susan' or 'I wonder if we should invite Susan', but we cannot say 'I wonder if to invite Susan'; it must be *whether* *to*. Secondly (though this is not a grammatical or an idiomatic restriction), in certain contexts or situations *if* might give rise to ambiguity, in which case it is advisable to use *whether*. For instance, 'Let us know if you intend coming' could mean either that you are to let us know your intention, one way or the other, in any case, or that if you do not intend coming there is no need to let us know.

These qualifications apart, since *whether* implies two possibilities, the usual practice is to use this word when alternatives are definitely stated, as in the quotation from the C.O.D. Even here, however, *if* might sometimes be heard in spoken English, but it would strike most people as unidiomatic. When no alternative is stated the general tendency (though it is in no sense a rule) would seem to be to use *whether* when the two possibilities are equally present in the speaker's mind and he is no more interested in the one than in the other, and *if* when the emphasis is on the one that is stated. Thus a person keeping a record of presences and absences would probably ask, 'Could you see *whether* Smith has arrived yet', since, for the purpose for which the information is required, his arrival or non-arrival are of equal importance. But if he wishes to see Smith, and is rather impatiently waiting for his arrival, then the question is more likely to be 'Could you see *if* Smith has arrived yet?' 'Ask him *if* he can come on Thursday' amounts almost to 'Tell him we should like him to come on Thursday' or 'that Thursday would be a convenient day, from our point of view, for him to come'; 'Ask him *whether* he can come on Thursday' leaves the question much more open and is prepared for an answer either way. Incidentally, you will notice, despite what the C.O.D. says, that the opening sentence in the present answer uses *whether*, not *if*, after *ask*. It was written quite spontaneously, and indeed was only noticed on a second reading, and most people would, I think, feel that it was correct. And why? Probably because the question is equally prepared for the answer 'yes' or 'no'.

Now as to your own sentences. In the second either *whether* or *if* could be used, with the distinction noticed above, but in the first neither is correct, for the sentence is quite meaningless. Presumably what is intended is that they (whoever 'they' happen to be) want to control the testing of nuclear weapons and to find out whether (or satisfy themselves that) the Russians really stop their tests; but to express this meaning the sentence would have to be completely re-worded. Or does it mean that they want to have the deciding voice in whether the Russians stop their tests? Again, however, the sentence would need to be recast.

QUESTION. I should like to know whether there is any rule about the use of the prepositions *of* and *from* as exemplified in such sentences as *A window is made of glass*, *A chair is made of wood*, *We make butter from milk*, *Bread is made from flour* and *flour is made from wheat*.

ANSWER. *From* is used when the material is thought of as something that is treated, fashioned or worked upon in order to produce the object or the commodity in question (e.g. *Cider is made from apples*, *Flour is made from wheat*, *The baby wore a christening robe made from its mother's wedding dress*). When *of* is used it denotes the material, the ingredients or the components of which the finished product consists. (*A chair is made of wood*, *Her dress was made of the finest silk*.) We cannot say *Wine is made of grapes* or *Butter is made of milk*, because grapes (as fruit) and milk (as milk) are not present in wine and butter



respectively; *from* is the word that must be used here, grapes and milk being thought of as the raw materials with which we start. In the spatial sense of the word, *from* denotes a starting point (*The train goes from St Pancras; to go from bad to worse*) and it is very much the same here. But we may say that shoes are made either of or *from* leather, according to the idea we wish to express.

In spoken English *out of* is sometimes used in place of *from*. (*Cider is made out of apples*.)

**QUESTION.** In an article entitled 'A Family Budget', in the bulletin 'London Calling Europe', I find the following sentence: 'My overheads at the garage are not high—about a day's work for electricity—and although on paper my two garage hands at £9 10s. 0d. a week are earning almost as much as I am, a great number of my expenses—like running a car—are included in the business'. I am unable to grasp the meaning of this sentence because I do not understand such words as *overheads*, *on paper*, *hands* at £9 10s. 0d., &c. Could you kindly explain them for me and give me the meaning, in plain English, of the above sentence?

**ANSWER.** *Overheads*. Short for *overhead expenses*, i.e. expenses such as rent, rates, lighting, cleaning of the premises, repairs to and maintenance of them, &c., which have to be met in any case, over and above any which are incurred in carrying out the work.

*On paper*: as would appear from what is set down on paper in the way of figures, &c. (implying that there are possibly things which these cannot, or do not, reveal). We might say 'On paper he is the better qualified of the two candidates', meaning that his academic qualifications, experience, &c. (i.e. those things which can be set down in writing) are superior.

*Hand*. An employee (usually used only, as the word would suggest, of a person employed on manual work; clerks, typists and other office employees would not normally be referred to as 'hands').

A simpler rendering of the passage you give would be as follows:

My overhead expenses at the garage are not high; they consist mainly of charges for electricity, and by one day's work I can earn sufficient to pay for that. If one takes into account only the actual money received (or paid out) and entered in the account books, then the two men whom I employ in the garage at £9 10s. 0d. a week each, are earning almost as much as I am; but actually I get more than would appear from the accounts, because a great number of my expenses, like the cost of running a car, are borne by the business, not out of my own pocket, so that indirectly they represent an addition to my salary.

*Hand*, *on paper* and *overhead expenses* (though not the abbreviated form *overheads*) are all given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary. Other reference works which you might find useful are *A Book of English Idioms* by V. H. Collins (Longmans), *A Dictionary of English Idioms* by B. L. K. Henderson and G. O. E. Handerson (Blackwoods, 2 vols), Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Clichés* (Routledge) and Paul Selver, *English Phraseology* (Brodie). Certain colloquial expressions are also included in Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield's *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford University Press). For slang or near-slang Eric Partridge's *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (Routledge) is useful.

## Book Reviews

**PATTERN PLAYS**, edited by E. C. Oakden and Mary Sturt.  
176 pages. Nelson. 4s.

This book contains 'six easy plays of varied kinds, based on literary stories'. Some of the stories, such as Robert Browning's 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin', are in verse and others, such as Grimm's 'The Travelling Musicians' and Chaucer's 'The Story of Dorigen', in prose. Both story and play are given, and in addition there are ten other stories, including 'King John and the Abbot of Canterbury' and Hans Andersen's 'The Emperor's New Clothes', which can be dramatized by the teacher. Advice on play-making is given in a short introduction.

The language of most of these plays and stories, which are meant primarily for older children in English schools, is difficult for foreign learners. A number of the plays, however, lend themselves to presentation by university students or by the upper forms of schools where English is well taught to an advanced level. The stories and plays are based chiefly on legends.

**NORMANDY TREASURE HUNT**. Harry Rée. 62 pages. Harrap.  
1951. 2s. 6d.

This little reading book written by the distinguished leader of Resistance Groups in France (and now headmaster of Watford Boys' Grammar School) is an admirable example of the kind of supplementary reader that is badly needed for children learning English as a foreign language. It is written in natural easy English, and the stories of the boys' little adventures and experiences are most attractive. The vocabulary is not over 'simplified', the expression is lively and the syntax is flexible and uncomplicated. The book, which is one of 'The Good Holiday Series', can be warmly recommended for middle forms of all types of secondary school abroad where English has been begun in Form I or earlier.

**THE TEACHING OF READING AND WRITING**. William S. Gray. 284 pages. UNESCO and Evans Bros. 1956. 18s. 6d.

This is No. X of the Monographs on Fundamental Education written for UNESCO. It bears the sub-title 'An International Survey'—and that is its strength and its weakness. For it has the greatest value as a world-wide survey, providing information and reportage on almost every possible aspect of teaching, reading and writing throughout the world: it is a most competent piece of work. It deals with 'The role of reading and writing in fundamental education', 'The influence of type of language on literacy training', 'Nature of the reading process', 'Reading attitudes and skills', 'Methods of teaching reading', 'The research', 'Reading programmes', 'Teaching adults to read', 'Findings of underlying the teaching of writing', 'Teaching handwriting to children', 'Basic principles handwriting to adults', and 'Action required to attain the goal'.

The valuable and important work that Dr Gray has done for the teaching of reading and writing is widely known and fully appreciated in this country. The only weakness of a work of this kind is inherent in its very nature, especially

when it has been compiled by such a scholar as Dr Gray: its thoroughness and width of scope prevent it from being as useful as it could be to the ordinary classroom teacher with forty or fifty pupils to teach. Teachers in many schools nowadays face almost insuperable problems and often many practical difficulties; these worry them and drive them to books for help and guidance; unfortunately they may not find what they need here. In spite of that, this book should be in every teachers' library in every school at home and abroad.

**SPOKEN ENGLISH.** A. G. Mitchell. 237 pages. *Macmillan*. 7s. 6d.

This is a clear straightforward account along Jonesian lines of the phonetics of English. The author is a member of the Council of the International Phonetic Association and a professor of English in the University of Sydney. The book contains much interesting information about English pronunciation in Australia.

The best chapter is probably that on the organs of speech (Chapter II). This is a model of clarity and thoroughness and is excellently illustrated by photographs and diagrams. The descriptions of the English vowels, diphthongs, and consonants (Chapters III-V) are also extremely well done, and some phonetic features, e.g. incomplete plosion, are more fully covered than elsewhere.

Professor Mitchell rightly points out that the sounds of a language are not 'like building blocks that are just fitted side by side to make up speech'. Chapter VI deals with 'sounds in combination', Chapter VII with length, and Chapter VIII with stress and rhythm. It cannot be said that VIII is wholly satisfactory, but clearly the author cannot be blamed for that: a great deal of descriptive work remains to be done on the difficult subject of speech-rhythm. He makes an interesting point or two here, but the notation used is too simple to be adequate.

Chapter IX follows on the whole the Armstrong-Ward analysis of intonation. There are some very questionable and impressionistic statements about the effects of using various tones—'The fall-rise intonation is the hesitant, doubtful one. . . . It takes a step forward and then a step back'. Mitchell appears to think that the main function of pitch-change in speech is to convey subtleties of attitude and feeling.

There is no 'special virtue about being consistent in pronunciation', as the author points out in Chapter X, 'Variant Pronunciations'. Many interesting examples of variant pronunciations of words, including place-names, in different parts of the English-speaking world are to be found here, but a strong protest must be entered against an argument based on single examples. Difference between a pronunciation recorded by Jones as the most widely used by 'educated' people and a pronunciation of the same word felt by Mitchell to be common in Australia is not sufficient to set up the former as 'the English usage' and the latter as 'the Australian variant': the list given on pp. 192-3 cannot be taken seriously.

In Chapter XI, 'Suggestions for Australian Teachers', the vexed problem of 'accent' is discussed, and advice is given on the teaching of 'the Educated Australian sounds' to pupils who use 'the Broad Australian'.

A final chapter consists of twenty-six pages of phonetically transcribed passages, mainly of literary prose. A variant of the I.P.A. script similar to that in Armstrong's *An English Phonetic Reader* is used.

The book is well printed and free of misprints. It is accompanied by a long-playing record, and reference is made to an item on this for each sound or phonetic feature dealt with.



# THE HISTORY AND MEANING OF THE TERM 'PHONEME'.

Daniel Jones. 20 pages. Supplement to 'Le Maître Phonétique', published by the International Phonetic Association, University College, London, W.C.1. 3s. 6d.

In this concisely and clearly written booklet Professor Jones gives a thumbnail sketch of the origin and use of the term 'phoneme', and points out that, if the term itself is modern, the idea is very old, and is implicit in the invention of alphabets to replace pictures as a means of writing languages down. People who are untrained phonetically have, in spite of their lack of training and so long as they 'remain uninfluenced by alphabetic traditions', a 'natural sense for phonemes', as the American linguist Sapir noticed when teaching American Indians to write their own languages. The idea was more explicit in the works of Henry Sweet, who drew a distinction, now familiar, between broad (i.e. phonemic) and narrow (i.e. allophonic) transcriptions, and also in the first statement (1888) of the aims of the International Phonetic Association, a document drafted by Paul Passy.

The term 'phoneme' (Russian *fonema*) was first used, Professor Jones reminds us, by Kruszewski, a pupil of the Polish philologist Baudouin de Courtenay at Kazan. It was de Courtenay who, during the 1870's, worked out the basic principle, and knowledge of his views gradually spread to western Europe. Another of de Courtenay's pupils, L. Ščerba, referred to the idea in an I.P.A. pamphlet published in 1911, and a few years later a phoneme theory was being regularly taught at University College, London.

Jones regards the psychological view of the phoneme, as advanced by de Courtenay and his followers, and the physical view, taken by Sweet, Passy, and others, as equally tenable. From a language-teaching standpoint, however, he prefers the latter, which is easier for the ordinary language-student to understand. He sees phonemics, moreover, as a part of phonetics. 'Phonetics', he declares, 'can neither be studied nor applied without the use of phonetic transcriptions, and adequate systems of transcription cannot be constructed without the theory of phonemes.' The Prague School, on the other hand, 'took the opposite course of treating phonemes as units of structure which were "realizable" as speech-sounds'.

Professor Jones repeats here the definition of 'phoneme' familiar to us from some of his other works, and objects anew to American extension of the term to cover length and other prosodic features. For the sake of consistency in usage he suggests a new term for any feature of speech (he does not mention print or writing) which is used to distinguish meanings: 'signifeme'. We can thus speak of signifemes of phone, signifemes of length, signifemes of pitch, &c. The term may well be a very useful addition to linguistic terminology, in enabling us to discuss speech with greater ease and clarity. It would be interesting to see it developed: 'signifemic' is an obvious derivative. But presumably 'allophone', 'allochrone', and so on will still be needed.

## ERRATUM—Vol. XII No. 4.

Dr Christopherson asks us to point out that in line 6, paragraph 2, of his letter printed on page 151 of our last issue, "Wienreich" should have been spelt "Weinreich".

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# Literature and the Film

ROGER MANVELL

(Dr. Roger Manvell, Director of the British Film Academy, and author of a number of books on the film (such as *A Seat at the Cinema*), discusses some outstanding examples of films which have been adapted from famous books and plays since his last contribution to English Language Teaching in 1954.)

During the past four or five years several very interesting films have been produced which are derived from great novels or great plays. All the films I have chosen to discuss in this article are adaptations from works belonging to English literature except two; these are Melville's *Moby Dick* and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. I have included discussion of these particular films because, taken together, they show some of the problems that are involved in the presentation on the screen of stories which have a vast canvas and an epic stature to them. The production of *Moby Dick*, made by John Huston, took place in British studios and on British locations, while the screenplay of *War and Peace* was to a large extent prepared for its American producer, King Vidor, by the British dramatist and screenwriter, Bridget Boland.

I will begin by discussing the film version of one of Bernard Shaw's finest plays, *Saint Joan*, which was for many reasons a failure. Then, after considering the classics of the nineteenth century, *Moby Dick* and *War and Peace*, I propose to give the rest of my space to the eternally fascinating subject of the adaptation of Shakespeare's plays to the screen. We are fortunate to be able to compare here the very differing work of three producers, an American, an Italian and a Russian, in addition to discussing the third Shakespearian film of our own actor-producer, Sir Laurence Olivier. All these films in one way or another raise points of the greatest interest and importance. Literature of established value, from past as well as modern times, is constantly being adapted to the screen, and it is obviously of concern to students of literature that as many as possible of the qualities present in the original work should be reflected in the screen versions. As we know to our cost, this is not always the case.

Joan of Arc is one of the most mysterious characters in world history. The Catholic Church, that had been a party to her martyrdom in the 15th century, was later, in the 20th century, to canonize her as a Saint. Everyone in Western culture speculates

about her; many have written novels and plays about her, trying to penetrate the mysterious origins of her power over men. But it remained for Bernard Shaw, who incidentally was not a Christian, to write the finest tribute to her in what many claim to be his finest play. Shaw saw her as a woman of abnormal strength of character and hypnotic energy whose claims to supernatural guidance bemused and fascinated her contemporaries—all except the English politicians, who saw in her the main obstacle to their desire to unite Catholic France to Catholic England in one great military power, and the Catholic Church itself, which saw in Joan's patriotic leadership the threat to what they called the unification of Christendom, the United States of Christ, the federation under the Pope of all Christian lands irrespective of race or frontier. Shaw's Joan recognized only the need to strengthen France for the French, claiming that she had been authorized to do so by certain Christian saints who had appeared to her in visions. So a technical trial was arranged by the Church accusing her of heresy and sorcery. Eventually Joan was condemned by the Church and then burnt by the English as a deluded witch.

A wonderful subject; and Shaw made it so, filling his play with his own 20th century conception of these 15th century arguments, the magnificent cut and thrust of secular and clerical thoughts roused by this all-powerful, illiterate peasant girl. Shaw makes her speak like an English north-country woman bounding with energy and faith—and this is how Sybil Thorndike played her in the original production in 1924. Like this, but also with a fine touch of inspiration and vision, the gift of a great and mature actress to the part.

The American director of the film version of the play, Otto Preminger, employed Graham Greene, the English novelist and playwright who is himself a Roman Catholic, to cut and adapt Shaw's long scenes of dialogue and dialectic and so turn the play into a feasible script for a film—which means, unhappily, losing all the fine controversy that gives the play its background, its potency and its dramatic authority. It also means the addition of a great deal of colloquial writing by Graham Greene himself that has nothing of Shaw's own compulsive prose rhythm or poetry, which are a part now of English literature. I grant that there are some magnificent performances in the film—by Felix Aylmer as the Church's Inquisitor, wise and grave in the small moments of argument left to him, by Sir John Gielgud as the Earl of Warwick, that refined and subtle representative of the English aristocracy, by Harry Andrews as the fanatical parish priest, de Stogumber. But there are certain performances which, I submit, bear no relation



whatsoever to the characters as Shaw wrote them—especially Richard Widmark's impossible Dauphin. He plays the part in the form of an imbecile, instead of as a cunning weakling with an obstinate intelligence.

But what of Joan herself? She is, after all, the chief challenge of either play or film to any actress. This is a part that calls not only for great intelligence but a high acting skill to concentrate the personality of the player into a performance which will live and inspire the audience at every vital moment of the action and of what is left of the argument. Otto Preminger wanted to use a newcomer without star association for this great part. After testing (it is said) many thousands of girls, Preminger chose a young American actress, Jean Seberg, for the part. There was considerable publicity over this choice.

Jean Seberg proves to be an actress of charming youth, striking looks, and considerable sympathetic talent. But she lacks the concentrated technical mastery of a fully experienced actress; yet such mastery seems to be essential to meet and fulfil the scope of such a part as this. Nor is she, I submit, a leader of men. She is too pretty, too pathetic, too feminine. This will not do for Joan. Read Shaw's remarkable Preface to his published play. He calls Joan a woman with a will, an insufferable nuisance till she gets her way; she was, in his own words, 'the sort of woman who wants to lead a man's life'. She was masculine and militant by temperament; he says she must have been 'a born boss'. She wanted to be a soldier; she dressed like a man, she spoke and behaved like a man. Whatever feminine qualities an actress brings to this part (and I think she must bring some), she must certainly not miss out the masculine ones.

Miss Seberg never escapes from being a pretty girl engaging our sympathies. She never commands our attention in the name of God. So she loses the secret of the part. This is a pity, for the film has much otherwise to commend it—its careful background, its decor, its acting in several supporting parts. I suggest therefore that you re-read Shaw's play and re-read his Preface about the character of Joan as he understands it. Then consider the achievements of the film and decide for yourself whether it is right or wrong in its approach.

Next we have two striking and unusual films to consider—both adaptations of books that combine great literary qualities with the presentation of vast actions of the kind the screen is well equipped to portray—the epic whale-hunt in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and the panoramic view of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

Both these books are as great in bulk as the *Gone with the Wind* in the scope of

their action. King Vidor's film of Tolstoy's novel runs three and a half hours; John Huston's *Moby Dick* about two hours. So to begin with, there is the discipline of reducing weight. *War and Peace* encompasses an enormous range of both subject and characters, and is little short of two thousand pages of print; *Moby Dick* is a long book written in a highly-charged poetic style the feeling of which must not be lost in the transition to the screen.

After seeing *War and Peace* I discussed this particular problem of adaptation with Bridget Boland, who had been one of the chief screenwriters working on this difficult script for King Vidor. She explained that the first thing she did was to free the screenplay from the novel's sub-plots, and indeed from any of the side-issues that are natural in a large book but certainly not essential from a strictly dramatic point of view. The same thing must also be done in the case of the characters; in a book of the great size of *War and Peace* many characters contribute little or nothing to the main story. Further than this, the thoughts of the characters as imagined and recorded by the writer cannot normally be dramatized or turned into dialogue or action. Only their effects can therefore be shown through the manner in which the characters speak and behave.

I put it to Miss Boland that there are three main aspects to *War and Peace* as a book. First, there is the huge canvas of the historical perspective, the portrait of a whole nation in crisis; secondly, the story of a large cross-section of people representing Russian society; and thirdly, the philosophy of the book and, in particular, the search through the central character of Pierre, said to be based on Tolstoy himself, for a satisfactory life based on spiritual values.

Miss Boland felt that the first elements had been fused in the screenplay—in other words, her aim had been always to present the historical events through their effect upon the principal characters, to give, as she put it, 'the panorama through the people'. As for the philosophy of the book, this had to be implied through the dramatization and behaviour of Pierre as a dramatic figure. Thought had to be interpreted in terms of action.

The film of *War and Peace* justified, I think, its unusual length; it held my attention throughout. The cast is of mixed nationality. The most heavily characterized performances are those of Herbert Lom as Napoleon and Oscar Homolka as Kutuzov, the cunning old Russian general who waits for Napoleon to over-reach himself and then orders his own retreat from Moscow. In a fine scene when he hears the news of the French withdrawal, he flings himself on the ground before the ikon and weeps his thanks to God. Some critics have said that Audrey Hepburn, who plays Natasha, the heroine,

gives too light, too *ingénue* a performance; she has the difficult task of carrying the audience with her when she deviates from her real love for Prince Andrew and falls into a passionate *affaire* with a wastrel. She always conveys strength of character through the impulsive innocence of this untried girl—her great eyes (her finest feature—they dominate her small, elf-like face) are alive with feeling, and the film owes a great deal to her vitality. Mel Ferrer and particularly Henry Fonda play well in the leading parts of Andrew and Pierre.

But the finest marks of style in King Vidor's film are in the rich interior décor—the candle-lit, lamp-lit interiors with their silken tapestries, gilded decoration, painted ceilings and marble columns and overmantels—and in the great beauty of the outdoor scenes, such as that of the duel between Pierre and the man he believes to be his wife's lover, with the dawn sun striking across the shining snow. These outdoor scenes culminate in the mass movement of the French and Russian armies, spread over wide areas of countryside in the bright spring, with the sunlit smoke of the cannonade, the pattern of long lines of uniformed men, their reds and greens slashed by the white bandoliers. Later, in the retreat from Moscow, we see the endless chain of Napoleon's army, self-defeated, speckling the horizon in a waste of snow. The deployment of armies before the widescreen camera is matched by painting-like beauty of composition and photography.

The cameramen for these films are both famous British artists—Oswald Morris for *Moby Dick* and Jack Cardiff for *War and Peace*. Both have achieved magnificently the sense of period in their use of colour; the photography is often like aquatint, or like the finely coloured prints of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Ships, men, battlefields and fine interiors render their period through pictorial colour and composition—and bring film design and photography near to painting.

Both *War and Peace* and *Moby Dick* are books which are deeply imbued with not only the philosophy but the personal character of their authors. It is this quality that is usually lost in a film adaptation—the atmosphere attached to every page of writing, whether concerned with vivid action or discursive comment. Instead, a new atmosphere must take its place—the essentially objective, dramatic atmosphere of a film conveyed by the style of dialogue, or the style of acting, by music, and by the quality of photography and composition which gives its own hall-mark to a film.

*Moby Dick* is also a well-scripted film; from the magnificent sermon of Father Mapple to the obsessed commands of Captain Ahab, the words belong to the right plane for the subject. In fact many of them are Melville's own.



The subsidiary characters were exceptionally well cast, especially Orson Welles's magnificent Father Mapple, Leo Genn's God-fearing Starbuck, the First Mate, Harry Andrews's fine, rasping performance as Stubb, the Second Mate, Richard Basehart's Ishmael and Bernard Miles's cunning characterization as the sailor called Manxman. These performances were not only grand, rough-edged, rounded characters; they were pitched at a degree or two larger than life to fit the larger atmosphere needed for the film of such a book. Only two elements failed, in my view, to match the exacting quality of this great tragic theme; Gregory Peck's Ahab was an actor acting, not a superman obsessed by his hate of the whale, Moby Dick, by whom he had been maimed. It takes a man with a larger emphasis, a larger scale of performance, to make Ahab's hate the supreme dramatic force that it is. The other element that failed, I believe, to match the titanic prose of Melville was the whale himself—for Moby Dick, as we see him pretty constantly on the screen, has bulk but no living, animal quality. He roars and rears like some huge submarine balloon, smashing men and ships, pounding even the whaling-vessel *Pequod* to planks and floating fragments. I am convinced it would have been better for us to see less of him and to be left to imagine more. The cinema is a medium well-disposed to *suggestion*, and the spectacular horror of this fatal struggle between man and the greatest of the beasts ('like a snow-hill in the air', says Melville) excites a technical curiosity as to how it was done rather than the pity and terror of a tragic finale. But the film of *Moby Dick* is a noble attempt to match a wellnigh impossible subject on the screen. No one with an ounce of feeling for the cinema should miss its sights and sounds.

Shakespeare is always, and quite rightly, valued for what the critics call his universality—by which I take it we mean, among other possibilities, the wide range of his human understanding and his intuitive appreciation of men and women in their personal as well as their social relationships. These values are common to us all, however divergent our national conventions, codes and temperamental responses to life may be. This great element in Shakespeare's work *can* be conveyed through translation. But Shakespeare is also an intensely national and an intensely idiomatic poet—and the very English qualities which permeate the greatness and the grandeur of his work are mostly untranslatable. So it is of interest to us who have always known Shakespeare in the original to see how his work appears when it is produced in another language and interpreted by actors of a different nationality and temperamental strain from ourselves.

*Othello* was produced not long ago for the Soviet screen by

Sergei Youtkevitch, who is well-known in Russia not only as a film-maker, but also as a writer on the art of the film and as a theatre designer. It is no wonder, therefore, that the first impression one gets from his film is the beauty of the studio décor and of the outdoor locations where the action is played. The second impression is that there are certain similarities of presentation when you compare the Soviet film and the strange and striking production of the same play on the screen made about the same time by Orson Welles, mainly in Morocco and Italy. Both directors begin with a visual unspoken prologue, like a grand overture to the tragedy; both break up the dialogue scenes into a variety of smaller pictorial units, developing the movement of the actors and deploying them in a great variety of settings in which they work as freely as possible in relation to the camera. Welles shot his film in Venice, in and around suitable medieval buildings in other parts of Italy, and on the ramparts of old Portuguese forts in Morocco. Youtkevitch shot a great deal of his Cypriot action (I gather) on the coast of the Black Sea.

Youtkevitch has a far greater dramatic control of the play than Orson Welles; he cuts far less of the dialogue, and he does not let the principle of movement run away with him, as Welles unfortunately does. The Russian film is magnificent, polished and luxuriously mounted with impeccable taste; Welles's film is also magnificent, but highly individual in style and improvised in manner. But for all the beauty and excellence of the Renaissance settings and costumes in the Russian production, it lacks the fundamental mixture of splendour, passion and sheer barbarity which belonged to Shakespeare's time—the cruel vigour of a period which gave a passionate vitality to what is sensitive and noble in its poetry. Othello as portrayed by Welles is a man who could both love his wife greatly and yet passionately strike her—a man innocently gullible, noble in feeling, emotionally over-endowed, at once refined and primitive. Welles, like Shakespeare, never forgets that Othello is a Moor, a coloured man living alone in a white community. The Othello of the very distinguished Russian actor Sergei Bondartchouk is as refined and distinguished as the actor himself—so when he strikes his wife before the assembly of officers and officials from Venice it becomes an action quite out of character. The dark make-up on his gentle, handsome, sensitive face cannot give him the primitive, passionate nature of Shakespeare's Moor, as Orson Welles undoubtedly does.

Yet both films are full of memorable scenes. Welles began with a prologue which is a great barbaric dirge—the film starts with the funeral procession of all those who have died in the tragedy, watched

by Iago as he hangs suspended from the castle walls in the hot sun, waiting for his death by torture. Then the action goes back to the beginning with the elopement of Desdemona and Othello, and the horror of her father when he hears the news. Youtkevitch has said that, much as he admires Welles's film, it began with the celebration of death, whereas his film begins with the celebration of life—a long montage sequence showing the growing passion of Desdemona for Othello cut in with scenes illustrating the fantastic hazards of his career. This leads into the scenes of a lonely marriage ceremony in a church, and then the play as written by Shakespeare takes over. The Russian actor, Andrei Popov, like the Irish Michael Mac Liammoir in Orson Welles's production, makes a real character out of Iago. For Shakespeare Iago was a recognized type of stage villain of his period, cold-blooded, calculating, bitingly ironic of tongue, cynical, inspired by the Italian Machiavelli. For us today he is difficult to understand; his villainy seems without any properly-rooted motive, and it is usually left to the actor to make a *tour-de-force* performance in the part. This is precisely what the two actors in these film productions do—Andrei Popov with his deep harsh voice and the twisted lips that show his teeth, Mac Liammoir with his intense watchfulness, playing with the power Iago possesses over his betters.

I have always maintained that Shakespeare both gains and loses by being filmed. His widely set and normally elaborate action gains through the freedom of movement permitted by the cinema. But the dangers of this are that the interest in décor and sheer action inevitably steals a high proportion of our attention from the dramatic poetry of the dialogue. The plays, in fact, lose their dramatic intensity; interest tends to be dispersed over too many new elements of place and action as well as over purely physical expression and gesture. On the other hand great visual point can be added to a scene in a manner impossible in the theatre; for example, Youtkevitch lets Iago, in his first important scene with Othello, follow his master through an ever-thickening labyrinth of fishing nets hung up on the beach, and Orson Welles has Roderigo killed in the sweaty atmosphere of a Turkish bath. In fact, where the inventive imagination of the adaptor seems to match the dramatic atmosphere of the play, then a new dimension is added by the pictorial freedom of place and action permitted by a film. But I am always uneasy when I see these intense, theatrical, and poetic scenes played in the open air against the rival beauty of the Mediterranean or the Black Sea. Nevertheless, the unending challenge Shakespeare's plays offer to the artistry of both director and actor can gain a new life through the dramatic medium of the cinema.



It is a long time since a film has created such intense controversy as Renato Castellani's Anglo-Italian production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. You will probably have read at the time some examples of the high praise and the savage attacks which the film received. The impulse behind the praise had little to do with Shakespeare the dramatist, whereas the attacks on the film had everything to do with Shakespeare. *Romeo and Juliet* is a traditional Italian story (only in Italy it is called *Juliet and Romeo*!). For Castellani, Shakespeare's play is second in interest to the dramatic story on which it is based, and the magnificent opportunity this story offers to reconstruct a moving picture of Renaissance Italy among the wonderful buildings of the period which survive to act as film settings—such as the Cathedral Square of Siena and the great palaces and noble houses of Venice. The result on the screen is some of the most wonderful colour and pictorial composition I have ever seen in a film—it is the colour and composition of the great masters of early fifteenth century Italian painting come to life. But a great deal of Shakespeare's poetry disappeared, including some favourite and familiar verse, while some new (and very banal) dialogue was added quite inexcusably (I think) here and there. Action was also invented to fill the screen with the movement a film requires. It was really a battle between Shakespeare and Castellani, in which both had right on their side because each was working for a different medium from the other!

Flora Robson, who plays the Nurse, gives to my mind the best performance in the film, and the one closest to the true Shakespearian tradition. She had Shakespeare at heart, as one would expect of her, and she helped when she could to keep the balance adjusted in his favour when Castellani grew impatient of his literary chains. She assisted the young and beautiful (but wholly inexperienced) actress, Susan Shentall, to speak the verse properly. But one must insist that this film remains a pictorial and not a Shakespearian triumph, embellished by the musical score (arranged by the Italian composer Roman Vlad) rather than by the finely-spoken verse of Shakespeare.

*Richard III* is Sir Laurence Olivier's third Shakespearian production on film. He produced *Henry V* in 1944 and *Hamlet* in 1948, and with them he started a new phase in the adaptation for the screen of the plays of our greatest dramatist.

*Richard III* is not an easy Shakespearian play to produce, even on the stage. It is a long, complicated, and sometimes obscure play—one of the earliest Shakespeare wrote. Put in the simplest terms it is the story of how an able and wicked man, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, gets the throne of England by methods closely akin to those of Hitler in our own time. Plays about English history

were popular with Elizabethan audiences, and Shakespeare wrote nine of them in seven years between 1591 (when he was just starting his career as a dramatist) and 1598.

The part of Richard himself is Shakespeare's first great character portrait, and he is surrounded by many other good subsidiary parts—for example, that of his brother Clarence (whose murder he secures in the great State prison of the Tower of London), and that of the nobleman who helps him get the throne, the Duke of Buckingham. Like most of the Elizabethan history plays, *Richard III* is as much legend as it is history. Indeed Richard is now thought by some historians to have been a much better man than his legendary reputation. However, for Shakespeare's dramatic purposes he stands an out-and-out villain, but a man with an engaging, if vicious, sense of humour, and a delight in explaining to the audience precisely how clever he is. Like the later character, Iago, he has a Machiavellian frankness.

When he had just finished the film, I spent the morning with Sir Laurence Olivier at his London house talking about the problems the play presented to him as a film-maker. He said, among other things, that making a film out of a play is like moving the audience on to the stage; the closer you get to the characters the more detail there is to watch and the more individual they must become. This generally means that less can be said than on the stage, and that much more detailed action has to be invented. The film is at once a more flexible and a more concentrated way of presenting a drama than the theatre. Therefore a great deal of cutting, rearranging of scenes and invention of supplementary action is necessary. Sir Laurence did this in varying degrees with both *Henry V* and *Hamlet*. It is true that the Shakespearian purists get angry with him. But they overlook, in my view, the vital point that Shakespeare himself was a working man of the theatre—writer, actor, manager and undoubtedly stage producer as well. The detailed history of the texts of his plays shows how scenes, lines and speeches were constantly subject to revision in his own time. They were scripts, not sacred texts. If Shakespeare were alive now, he would be the first to collaborate with such an actor of the theatre as Sir Laurence in the proper and radical adaptation of his work for the new media of radio, television and film. As a practical and professional writer, he would be heartbroken if his work were not presented in such a way as to gain the maximum effect on the audience.

Now he is dead, it is of course only correct to adapt his work with the respect which is due to so great a dramatist. No one realizes this more than Olivier himself. He knows his film will be shown all over the world, that the medium offers an incomparable chance

(impossible in any single production for the theatre) to assemble the greatest British talent of the time—actors, designers, musicians and technicians—and to achieve for this play the largest audience it can ever be expected to reach. But clarification and simplification are essential. And there was almost unanimous agreement that the play *gained* from Olivier's drastic, but dramatically correct, treatment.

What results on the screen is a swiftly moving and wholly intelligible drama of the political intrigue resulting from the actions of the claimants to the throne and their various supporters. What is not made clear by Shakespeare's words is made clear by Olivier's inventive action—whispers in the ear, spying at windows at what is happening inside the Court, and many small, imaginative touches which provide both action and enlightenment at the same time.

The cast is headed by Sir Laurence himself as Richard—crook-backed, long-nosed, his walk a spiderous limp, his manner a sinister assumption of good humour as he plays off man against man; his tongue sharp and cold as ice—a macabre but somehow engaging villain when he takes us into his confidence. Richard, in fact, is that favourite Elizabethan stage character, the villain with humour; a deadly humour which has made the part popular for centuries—first with great actors like Burbage in Shakespeare's own time, and since then with Garrick, Kean, Booth and Irving. Sir Laurence himself appeared in the part in an Old Vic production some years ago. How we enjoyed then Richard's evil confidences to the audience! For the film, he told me that he took his cue from the technique of television; he lets Richard talk to us directly through the camera, even walk with us, the camera being identified with ourselves and moving along beside him.

Richard's first victim in the play is his weak but kindly brother, Clarence. Clarence is played by Sir John Gielgud, whose rich and wonderfully modulated voice speaks Shakespeare's lines with more music and fluency than any other actor on the British stage. If Sir Laurence is our greatest heroic actor, then Sir John is our greatest romantic one.

The second of Richard's victims is Anne, tragic widow of an heir to the throne. Claire Bloom plays this part. Richard has been responsible for the death both of Anne's husband and of her father-in-law. Here Olivier makes one of his most controversial—and most effective—changes in the text. In the play itself there is a single early scene in which Richard woos the Lady Anne at the funeral of her father-in-law and tames her indignant spirit then and there. It is, we must face it, an incredible scene, very difficult to play. But Olivier splits it into two parts, separated by other events, and this makes it more plausible. He also follows an eighteenth century



tradition by making the funeral that of her husband instead of her father-in-law—which makes her later yielding to his hypnotic power even more arresting.

On the death of the King (Richard's own brother Edward), only his two sons, the boy princes, remain to stand between Richard and the throne. The Duke of Buckingham allies himself with Richard because he believes that in supporting the man most likely to become King his own power will be reinforced. Buckingham is played by Sir Ralph Richardson as a strong, intelligent, and proud man who works hard in the interests of his master, but lacks his utter ruthlessness in evil.

*Richard III* is a film of great pictorial possibilities; it is photographed in colour, and the Vistavision process is used, which gives a fairly wide picture, but not the abnormally wide one of Cinemascope. The set and costume design is by Roger Furse, who has worked on all Olivier's Shakespearian films. Except in moments of great pageantry (like the Coronation scenes) the colours are quietly blended—the strong colours of the costumes offset against plain neutral backgrounds. The daylight pageantry with which those in power flaunt their position is contrasted with the darkness of the dungeons where those who have fallen from power await assassination. The shadows of characters in the drama often make their own sinister comment—silent pictorial symbols of intrigue or of destruction. These contrasts of pictorial action are matched closely by Sir William Walton's music, which emblazons the pageantry and makes hideous both darkness and murder. But everything centres on the character of Richard. He is in truth a madman; and Olivier lets the madness show in sudden paroxysms of uncontrolled rage once he is in power.

Films such as the American production of *Julius Caesar* and Olivier's *Richard III* have shown that a special technique must be evolved to present Shakespeare to the fullest advantage on the screen. Action, subtle and essentially *undistracting*, must be invented to point the meaning of lines which might otherwise pass unheeded by audiences over-used to picture-watching. The camera must concentrate on the speaker and avoid unnecessary cutting-away to observe the faces of those addressed (which is common practice in all normal film-making). Camera movement and the use of close-up must be carefully designed to assist the structure and tempo of the verse-speeches or the cut-and-thrust of sharper dialogue. Methods such as these must be constantly introduced as production follows production from the hands of those film-makers who are as responsive to Shakespeare's works as they are responsive to the great medium of the film through which they seek to present them.

# Concerning the Present Tense

R. A. CLOSE

An examination of statements often made about the uses of the tenses in English yields ample evidence of the need for a systematic analysis of modern English grammatical and syntactical usage and for greater accuracy in description.

One statement can safely be made: the distinctions that determine whether we use one tense or another in English puzzle students of English as a foreign language in many different parts of the world. Difficulties over tenses may vary from country to country, and require treatment adapted to the learner's own language: but they are not confined to one particular language area.

The same difficulties do not worry native speakers of English, or so G. H. Vallins assures us<sup>1</sup>. Some usages by native-English speakers might strike a foreign student or teacher as 'mistakes' because they conflict with the kind of over-simplified 'rule' discussed below. For instance:

*Example 1.* (My wife speaking to our son, Peter) Oh it's you. You went down and brought the paper? Did it just come?

*Example 2.* (Robert Graves, the poet, beginning a broadcast)  
Here I sit, in this studio . . .

Both these usages would be marked 'wrong' in many a foreign student's exercise book, though I would regard them as entirely permissible in the circumstances in which they occurred.

In using one tense instead of another, the native speaker may be automatically following a habit drawn from his social environment. However, he may often also have to determine unconsciously which of two habits of speech to follow at a given moment: and a speaker or writer may find himself consciously preferring a tense-form because he feels it expresses his meaning more effectively. What exactly decides the choice would be almost as much of a mystery to the native-speaker, if he ever thought about it, as it is to the foreign learner.

As teachers of English as a foreign language we soon become acutely aware of this problem. We try to deal with it in the classroom by simple, teachable, and often plausible rules-of-thumb which are generalizations based on common types of usage. Even if we do not teach these rules-of-thumb, we often expect our pupils to deduce them from the examples we have given. In framing or

<sup>1</sup>In 'The Pattern of English', p. 45.

accepting these rules, whether we state or imply them, our thinking is usually conditioned by the logic of formal Graeco-Latin grammar. That logic may be valid for those parts of the traditional structure of English which are due to Greek and Latin influence; but it is not necessarily so for the living structure of English to-day. Nevertheless, we still apply this ancient code for lack of an up-to-date one. In accordance with it, we do three things in particular. First, we attach great importance to mere words and their juxtaposition. It is not a far cry from

After *sunt cui*, it means *there are some*,

Remember the Subjunctive Mood should come to the kind of statement this article is enquiring into. Second, we assume that every situation in language has its Rule (which is still there, underlying the examples we teach, even if we keep it dark till the fourth or fifth year), and that every Rule has its Exceptions. Belief in the Inevitability of Exceptions has permitted us to make statements that are not verifiable or accurately phrased. Belief in the Inviolability of the Rule Itself has caused us, in the case of the tenses, to devote many hours to exercises requiring answers in terms of *either* tense (a) *or* (b), in circumstances where either could be 'right'. Third, we apply the principle of rule and exception not only to those features of the language to which it might be applicable, but also to those to which it is not. It may be reasonable, for example, to say that the plural of nouns is formed in such and such a manner, except in specific cases of historic interest: but it is foolish to argue that in English we can make a distinction between *one thing* and *more than one*, except in the case of things identified by the following *words*. The latter is the kind of argument we must beware of in discussing the use of the tenses.

About the Present Tenses, the following assertions are popular:

STATEMENT I. *The Present Continuous\* (or Progressive) denotes that an act is performed NOW, at the moment of speaking.*

Example 3. I am (now) writing an article: you are (now) reading it.

STATEMENT II. *The Simple Present\* denotes that an act is performed habitually.*

Example 4. I write a few hundred words every day.

STATEMENT III. *There are certain verbs which do not take the Present Continuous: they take only the Simple form.*

Example 5. Now you see what I mean.

Example 3 is perfectly good English and we can find any number of usages on the same pattern. Frequent exercise, from an early

\*I use these terms partly because they are generally understood, partly because one could, in condemning them, replace them by worse.



stage, in using that pattern in appropriate situations is no doubt an important part of the learner's training. Whether the value of that exercise can justifiably lead us to decide (a) that the Present Continuous should invariably be the first tense to which the student is introduced, or (b) that it is the normal tense for present time in English, is another matter. (a) is a question of method, and, like all teaching methods, if it proves effective in one set of circumstances, then it is a good one for those circumstances, but not essentially so for all others. (b) depends for its meaning on one's conception of present time and then for its validity on a systematic examination of actual usages and of the situations in which they occur. In some parts of the world, the Present Continuous has been given exaggerated importance. Excessive devotion to it in teaching has been due largely to a very laudable attempt to associate language with other physical activity—to make pupils say, for example, 'We are writing' when they actually *are* writing. The results are not always successful, as we shall see in a moment.

The trouble is that Statement I is less satisfactory than its accompanying example. Yet not only is it taught widely as an axiom, but some teachers go to the length of insisting on a fixed association in the pupils' minds between the Present Continuous and the word 'now' (insistence on 'mere words and their juxtaposition'). Some who insist on that association and also put their trust in Statement II are, however, not abashed when faced with:

*Example 6.* I used to write all my letters by hand. Now I type them. Their reaction is either, 'Ah, that's an exception', or 'It's wrong, that's all.'

A serious defect in Statement I, as worded above, is that it does not fit the example. 'I am writing' does not, to me, suggest *an act performed* but *action in progress*<sup>1</sup>. It describes me at work, in the process of going through an act which is, in fact, *not* performed yet. If I, a native user of English, wished to report an *act performed now, at the moment of speaking*, I should, I think, instinctively use the Simple Present, as did Robert Graves in Example 2. 'I put my pen down at this point, get up and walk over to the window.' What have I said? That came out quite naturally as I went through the motions. As far as I can understand the working of my own mind, I chose that tense because I wanted to relate acts completed (at the moment of speaking), not to describe myself engaged in unfinished activity.

Introspection in such matters can be helpful, and also unreliable. Objective observation of usages and the situations in which they

<sup>1</sup>This distinction was explained admirably by the late H. J. Uldall in two articles in *English Language Teaching* (Vol. II, Nos 5 and 6, 1948).

are discovered should be a surer guide<sup>1</sup>—though in giving the example that follows I may be selecting one that fits my own assumption. The example is from a television commentary on a mile race:

*Example 7.* Here they are—the runners *are now taking off* their sweaters and *moving* up to their marks. (The viewer sees them moving across the screen, taking their places on the starting line.) That's Ibbotson, second from the right. They're off! No—that was a false start. The starter *motions* them back. (The viewer sees the act of motioning completed before his eyes.)

With film and television at the service (one hopes) of education, we may now be able to demonstrate action in progress and synchronize it with the spoken use of the Present Continuous. Note, however, that the commentary must be *synchronous* with action, and not synoptic. It is the Simple Present that is synoptic, taking in the whole action at once and depicting it as something achieved. This is from a film commentary (by a British narrator for the Japanese film *The Ascent of Manaslu*):

*Example 8.* As we approach Sama, we encounter snow. (This sums up the whole scene of people climbing up into the snow. It was intended not as a description of a custom but as part of a relation of something that, incidentally, had never been done before.)

This synoptic use of the Simple Present is traditional in captions; and the sensible advice that a picture representing action should always be described by the teacher in the Present Continuous must be modified by the admission that, in illustrated story-books and newspapers, captions reporting action are usually in the Simple Present. Thus:

*Example 9.* Aeneas rescues his father from the burning city. In order to create the atmosphere in which 'Aeneas is rescuing' would be natural, one would have to imagine the action in progress, with a synchronic description as in the first part of Example 7.

Failure to see the distinction which Example 7 on television would bring out very vividly, leads to unnatural examples from the very teachers who pride themselves on keeping closely to the living tongue. Take, for example, the doctrine that the Present Continuous should always follow the words 'Watch me'. Now 'Watch me, I'm doing a dangerous experiment' is quite all right: you see the action going on. But 'Now watch me. I switch on the current and stand back' is also right: you see these two acts resolutely performed,

<sup>1</sup>See the articles by Professor Randolph Quirk in *English Language Teaching* (Vol. XII, No. 1, 1957) and 'English Studies', XXXVIII, 97 ff. I am indebted to Professor Quirk for reading this article in manuscript and for suggesting one or two amendments to it, which I have been glad to adopt.

and you wait for the results. 'I'm switching on the current' might mean fatal delay; while 'I'm standing back' does not report my firm step backward, but describes me in motion or in position. Those two acts were, incidentally, momentary ones. It is a failing of grammarians to generalize from such *incidental* factors, or to take advantage of them to invent a new category such as the Instantaneous Present. No, it is not the momentariness that really matters here<sup>1</sup>: once more the essential point is the speaker's instinctive desire to stress the completion of the act. Nor can one avoid this conclusion by arguing that 'I switch on the current' is an ellipsis for 'Every time I do this experiment, I (habitually) switch . . .' As I imagined it, that is not what my demonstrator meant. 'Ah then,' comes the reply, 'wasn't he using scientific demonstrator's English?' (I have also heard it called football commentator's English: 'Palmer gets the ball. He passes to Scott.') Perhaps so: but scientific demonstrator's English can be very much alive, while English-teacher's English can be as dead as chalk.

This deadness becomes noticeable in the drilling of patterns containing the Present Continuous in situations in which the simple form would be easier and more idiomatic. It is, of course, unidiomatic to use the simple form in commenting to your class on an action you are in process of performing; but it is equally unidiomatic to use the continuous form in referring to the whole performance. You can say, 'I'm going to the door' while you are on your way there; but it would be ridiculous to snap your book shut, declaring 'I'm closing my book'—a statement which would need either to be synchronized with very-slow-motion or to serve as an announcement of intentions.

With the substitution, therefore, of 'action is in progress' for 'act is performed', Statement I could perhaps safely cover a considerable number of usages involving the Present Continuous.

Now let us turn to Example 4. Unobjectionable, and we could find many like it. Statement II: true, so long as one does not pretend that it does more than apply to a certain group of examples or that the 'habitual' factor is the fundamental one. It would be going too far to insist (as one teacher did) on a fixed association between the Simple Present and the words 'every day'. Note:

*Example 10.* I am seeing the dentist every day this week.

Or note Example 2 again: the speaker could say that if he had only broadcast once in his life-time.

Statement II, then, is the truth but not the whole truth. In any case, it is modified in Statement III. Here again, Example 5 is

<sup>1</sup>Neither is it *length* of duration that decides the continuous form should be used.



perfect; but Statement III is misleading, in so far as all verbs in English, except the pure auxiliary and modal verbs, can take both simple and continuous forms. Moreover, Statement III is unfortunate if it leads, as there is a tendency for it to do, to delay in introducing words like *see, hear, want, know, understand, &c.*, that eager pupils want to know.

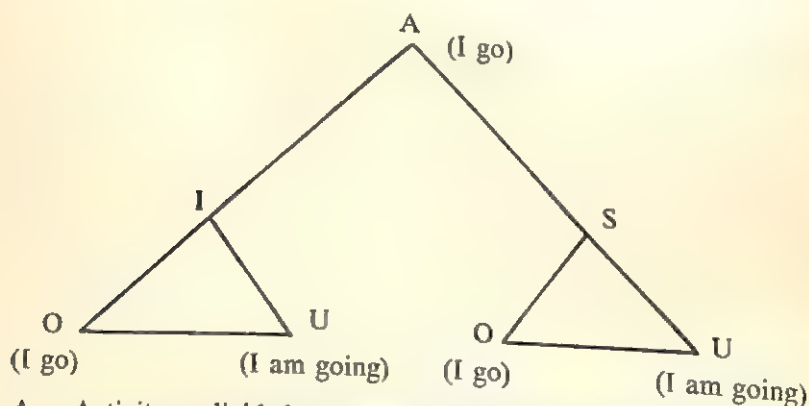
Is it possible to reach conclusions about the uses of the tenses that are both accurate and helpful to the practising teacher? The notes which H. J. Uldall published in this journal in 1948 have gone unchallenged but equally, it seems, unheeded. In the following paragraphs, I shall try to develop some of his ideas. The result cannot be anything but unsatisfactory, since two essentials for a task of this kind are lacking:

First—*A systematic survey of modern English usage.*

Second—*A method for formulating sound and useful statements about the evidence disclosed by such a survey.*

To those two essentials we should no doubt add one imponderable: why we say what we do. My only excuse, then, for writing more is to stress the limitations of existing statements.

We are concerned in this discussion with words describing *activity*. Activity can occur in single or in repeated acts; it can occur in completed acts, or uncompleted; in completed or uncompleted series of acts. These aspects of activity can be shown diagrammatically, thus:



A = Activity undivided, conceived in the abstract, in general, when neither completion nor incompleteness matters, nor, indeed, time.

I = A single act.

S = A series of acts.

O = An act or series conceived simply, without the emphasis contained

in the idea of U. An act or series conceived as completed, seen synoptically; the finished product of activity; a whole or permanent series of performances.

U = An act or series conceived as uncompleted, seen analytically; the activity in process; a partial or temporary series of performances.

This assumes that the difference between O and U is one of *aspect* within the same tense; that the native-speaker uses U instead of O when he is particularly interested in aspect U, and vice versa; that O is primary and U secondary. With reference to that last assumption, history—however irrelevant it is to some problems in linguistics—might here be allowed to help: U developed much later than O. As far as concerns the experience of children learning English as a mother-tongue, my own three mastered O before U.

In referring to Statement III, I suggested that all activity can be imagined in this way in English. Some single *acts* are obviously much more easily and more often imagined in a stage of incompletion than others are. One can easily and frequently see people *moving, running, working, writing*, and can hear commentary on their actions synchronized with their movements. You can be aware of people *looking and listening*; but it is much rarer to catch them in the middle of the single act of *seeing or hearing*. They see or hear, or they don't. A typical saying in English is precisely that: 'You see (know, remember, like) it or you don't'. *Look* is to *see* as *focus* (with a camera) is to *take a photograph*. It is far easier to analyse the action of *looking* than the momentary, involuntary act of receiving a visual impression on a sensory film. The latter act *can* be analysed: a man who is intoxicated or has something wrong with his eyesight may be seeing double. We can also perceive the single acts of *knowing, understanding, remembering, forgetting, &c.*, in process of being performed, but the need for such a refinement rarely arises. We are much more likely to come across these acts in a partial or temporary series; e.g. 'Mary is seeing that young man a little too often.' However, the beginner does not need 'I am seeing': he will soon need 'I am working'.

There is something to be said, therefore, for presenting the Simple Present as the *primary* form for all verbs (whatever the precise chronological order in which material is taught) and *for bringing in the Continuous only in those cases in which we easily and frequently imagine the action in progress, and only when we are concerned with that particular aspect of activity*.

These aspects of activity can be applied to all the tenses in English—Present, Past and Future; Perfect, Past Perfect and Future Perfect; to the Conditional Mood; to the Active and Passive Voice,

except that the more compound forms of the Passive represent a degree of subtlety for which English has so far found neither the need nor the expression.

To this concept of activity, must be added a concept of time. 'All time is time present', said T. S. Eliot; and in English grammar all time might be regarded as Present until some part of it is clearly fenced off and detached from the Present, to become Past or Future. We assume there is no fence till we come to one (and what constitutes a fence we shall find out when we come to it). There may be no fence at all, in which case all eternity is present; or we may narrow the present down almost to nothing by setting up a fence 'a moment ago', indicating by such a phrase that an act took place at a moment 'back from now', at a point in time detached from the present.

Finally, to these concepts of activity and time, we must add two principles that apply, also, to every tense. First, we may desire to shift the spotlight of emphasis; for example, in aspect U we may be particularly concerned with the beginning of the action, the middle of it, the last stages of it, the duration of it, the fact that it is only going on for a time, or is yet to be finished, or may never be finished. Second, the ultimate choice of tense or aspect will depend, as choice involving meaning often does, less on objective facts (e.g. whether the action is really in progress or not) than on what the speaker is concerned with, or is primarily concerned with, at the time.

'Correct' usage of tense-forms might therefore be said to result from:

*Either the mechanical application, in appropriate circumstances, of patterns of words one has heard or exercised frequently—success in this case depends on the teacher's knowing precisely what patterns are appropriate to what circumstances, and on the student's remembering when to use which pattern and acting accordingly—*

*Or a socially-acceptable correlation between the particular aspect of activity in time that one desires instinctively or consciously to light upon, and the tense-form one selects. However, in order to be socially-acceptable, the correlation would have to take into account accepted meanings (e.g. of 'look', 'see'), and to conform with conventions (e.g. 'I'm going home tomorrow') which the speaker must know before he can play the game properly.*

May we now take a variety of usages involving the present tenses, and see how far they can be classified according to the diagram on page 62? I deliberately avoid the question of 'grading for teaching purposes' at this stage, on the grounds that we should not allow pedagogical considerations to influence a classification of actual usage.



## I — O

- (i) Here I sit . . . (now, once only).
- (ii) I get up and walk over to the window (ditto).
- (iii) You see what I mean (ditto).
- (iv) How do you like your new room? (I assume your feelings in the matter are definite. 'How are you liking it?' suggests that your feelings are in process of development).
- (v) Where do you come from? I come from Spain. (The act of coming from Spain is here completed).
- (vi) Aeneas rescues his father (the whole act, in synopsis).
- (vii) President Resigns (Newspaper heading: the act, in synopsis, conceived as present even though it actually happened yesterday).
- (viii) The examinations begin next Wednesday. (Though in reality the act is yet to take place, it is definitely planned and conceived as accomplished, as good as done).
- (ix) As I speak these words, the procession is entering the hall. (Though in reality the act of speaking may not be complete, *I am not primarily concerned with that fact*: what I am chiefly concerned with is the action of entering which is going on before my eyes. The emphasis is reversed in: 'As I am speaking these words, the procession enters the hall.')

## I — U

- (i) The kettle's boiling (now: you see the water bubbling).
- (ii) I'm still writing this article.
- (iii) 'Now we're moving,' say the passengers as the ship at last draws away from the quay. (*The spotlight is on the beginning of the action of moving*: cf. I—O (ix), and the comment on it.)
- (iv) The sun's setting—it's time to go home.
- (v) Now the river's flowing at a terrific rate.
- (vi) 'Aeneas' (a Trojan radio commentator might have said) 'is rescuing his father.'
- (vii) I'm taking my oral examination next Wednesday. (The arrangements are made; the action has therefore, in a sense, begun; but I do not go so far as to conceive the act as accomplished.)

## S — O

- (i) Here I sit, day after day . . .
- (ii) I get up at seven, as a rule.
- (iii) You *always* see what I mean.
- (iv) When does the post come? It generally comes about eight.
- (v) Now I type all my letters.
- (vi) The sun sets in the west (cf. I—U (iv)).

- (vii) The Rhine flows past Coblenz. (Though the Rhine is always flowing past Coblenz and has not stopped doing so, we are concerned with the process as a whole, not with a partial, temporary aspect of it as in I—U (v). This example could perhaps equally well be classified under I—O.)
- (viii) Aeneas does not rescue his father *habitually*. (vide I—O (vi), and Statement II.)

## S — U

- (i) I'm getting up at half-past six this week (a partial or temporary series of acts).
- (ii) We're hearing a lot about nuclear energy these days (ditto).
- (iii) That child next door is always banging on the piano. (The series is uncompleted in the sense that it goes on and on.)

In such a classification, all we can be fairly certain of is the natural usage accepted by educated native speakers. It may well be that an explanation of the kind I am attempting here will be of little help to a foreign learner until he knows the language extremely well; and that any simpler explanation will be an *over-simplification*. For teaching purposes, we might no doubt have to rely on a systematic survey and frequency-count, adopt certain types of usage as 'the commonest', and base our teaching on them. Or we might decide that in the long run such-and-such a usage is the most helpful starting-point, whether it happens to be the commonest or not. We might even find it expedient to use rules-of-thumb which must later be revised. What is important is that text-book writers, teacher-trainers, and teachers themselves, whatever the device they decide to use, should know exactly what they are doing. They should not confuse method or pedagogical advice with descriptive statement. For example, it is perhaps a good method (not necessarily the only one) to begin teaching with the Present Continuous: that fact does not by itself justify the statement that the Present Continuous is the normal present tense in English. It is undoubtedly a good idea to advise beginners, if need be, not to use *see*, *he know*, &c., in the Present Continuous: but that does not prove Statement III to be true.

Once we have begun to clarify our statements about the present tenses, we can soon see some of the fallacies associated with others. It would not be difficult to classify usages under I—U, S—O and S—U, involving the Present Perfect, Past, Perfect and Future. However, we should first have to get the concept clear in respect of these, and that would need another chapter.

# Verse Speaking in the English Class

H. A. CARTLEDGE

Many teachers are curiously reluctant to use verse as an aid to teaching spoken English. Some of them say that English verse is 'difficult' and beyond the comprehension of elementary students. Others, who themselves have a genuine love of English poetry, think that students should not be introduced to it until they are able to appreciate it as literature. Both of these attitudes are mistaken. Verse can be used, even in elementary classes, for teaching spoken English, without any fear of destroying the potential liking of students for English poetry. Its successful use depends, of course, on the material which the teacher chooses and on the manner in which he uses it, and the purpose of this article is to offer some suggestions on these points. Properly used, English verse has two important qualities for oral training. The first is that it normally follows in its rhythms the natural inflections of the voice, so that anyone who reads it aloud is almost bound to get both syllable stress and sentence stress correct. Suppose we make up a doggerel epitaph of the kind sometimes found on tombstones in country churchyards:

Under this stone lies Poacher Jim.

No more rabbit pie for him.

The rhythm of the couplet brings out every word in it which needs to be emphasized in order to make the meaning clear. At the other end of the scale we may quote an epitaph of a very different character. This one was written on a formal occasion—the burial in St. Paul's of the Duke of Wellington—by a poet whose official duty it was to write it:

In the vast cathedral leave him.

God accept him. Christ receive him.

he tone is different, but the rhythm follows that of the spoken word equally closely.

S The other quality of verse is that it sticks in the memory, and any trace of correct English which remains in a learner's head is surely a valuable acquisition for him. As a schoolmaster I have more than once been greeted by former pupils, even those who had seemed to just successfully all attempts to teach them a foreign language, with some such remark as 'I can still say some of those bits of poetry that you used to make me learn', after which they proceed to recite a line or two to prove their point. If this can happen to a faint-hearted or linguistically ungifted, what a tremendous benefit it must be for those who are able and willing to learn.



The strange thing is that quite often the same teachers who shrink from using verse for oral practice will very willingly teach English songs to their students. If they are asked why, their motives seldom seem very clear, except that they wish to give the class an opportunity of letting off steam after a spell of hard work on the language. This again is a pity. Singing does not necessarily give practice in accurate pronunciation, and as the singing is usually choral the teacher has little opportunity of detecting, let alone correcting, the mispronunciations of individual students who may be bellowing out the chorus lustily but quite incomprehensibly. Even opera stars, in the favourable conditions of a broadcasting studio, often fail to make clear what they are singing about, particularly in a foreign tongue, and elementary students cannot be expected to do much better.

The other and more serious drawback of songs for the purpose we are discussing is that the needs of the music are apt to do violence to the natural stress which, as has already been said, is a valuable quality of spoken verse. The hymns which are sung in Anglican churches are full of examples of wrong stresses for which the music must be blamed, for instance the one quoted (in a different context) by Jespersen in his book 'Language, its Nature, Development and Origin':

Teach me to live that I may dread  
The grave as little as my bed.

When this couplet is sung to its customary tune, the second 'as' in the last line has to be given a stress which is totally unwarranted by the meaning of the sentence. There is another example, though perhaps a less serious one, in the first line of Ben Jonson's song of 'Drink to me only with thine eyes'. The word 'with' in this line has to be held on for two notes of the music. The first of these notes is a prominent one, coming as the climax to a succession of steadily rising notes and then gliding down to the second. The effect of this, though musically very beautiful, is to give the word 'with' a prominence which it could not have if the line were spoken with a natural rhythm. This is not a defect in the song, but it is an indication that for practice in oral English it is perhaps better to use spoken verse than songs.

Let us now turn to the questions of selecting material and using it. One problem in connection with the choice of material is the familiar one, that the mental age of students is generally well ahead of their linguistic age in a foreign language. The instinct to turn to the English children's verse must be resisted. Nursery rhymes are most unsuitable for children older than those for whom they were composed. There are a number of jingles which beginners may be taught for the sake of some recurrent sound or other. 'Sing

a song of sixpence', for example, gives practice in the sound [i]. 'Shoes and Stockings', by A. A. Milne, with its choruses of 'Hammer, hammer, hammer' and 'Clatter, clatter, clatter', helps with the sounds [h] and [æ]: but the emphasis on these one or two sounds can be so strong that it overshadows the reading of the rest of the verse and the result becomes mechanical.

Some of the nonsense verse in which English literature abounds is perhaps better for the narrow purpose of practising sounds. Verse of this kind can be over-emphasized and over-recited without being spoiled. That is half the fun of it. The rich, rolling smugness of the pelican chorus from Edward Lear, which so closely suits the comical, self-satisfied smirk on the faces of the birds themselves, can stand any amount of emphasis and remain all the better for it:

Ploffskin, Pluffskin, Pelican jee—  
We think no birds so happy as we!  
Plumpskin, Ploshkin, Pelican jill,  
We think so then and we thought so still.

A poem called 'Five Little Owls' is equally good for this kind of work:

Five little owls in an old elm tree,  
Fluffy and puffy as owls could be,  
Blinking and winking with big round eyes,  
At the big round moon that hung in the skies.  
As I passed beneath, I could hear one say,  
'There'll be mouse for supper, there will to-day'—  
Then all of them hooted, tu-whoo, tu-whoo,  
'Yes, mouse for supper, loo loo, loo loo.'

Although written primarily for children, much of the English nonsense verse has qualities of wit and even sophistication which commend it to older readers. This is particularly true of some of the verse of Lewis Carroll. The sorry story of the Walrus, the Carpenter and the Oysters, for instance, is not a very edifying one for small children, but it can be used very successfully with adult students. Another excellent source of suitable verse for recitation will be found in the two collections of 'Nursery Rhymes of London Town', by Eleanor Farjeon. These are, in fact, nursery rhymes in name only, since each of them is really a very witty play on words, based on the names of various parts of London.

A good poem for children's classes is 'Soldier, Soldier', which gives opportunities for solo and chorus, for gesture and action, in fact, for the whole of the class to take part in a combined performance. Here are the words, for those readers who may not know them already:

*Girl (solo):*

Oh, soldier, soldier, won't you marry me  
With your musket, fife and drum?

*Soldier (solo):*

Oh no, sweet maid, I cannot marry thee,  
For I have no sword to put on.

*Chorus:*

Then up she went to her grandfather's chest  
And she brought him a sword of the very very best,  
And the soldier put it on.

In successive verses the word 'sword' is replaced by single-syllable names of garments—hat, cloak, gloves, shoes. When 'gloves' or 'shoes' is used the chorus will say 'fetched him a *pair*' and, of course, 'put *them* on.' The last verse brings a surprise:

*Girl:*

Oh, soldier, soldier, won't you marry me  
With your musket, fife and drum?

*Soldier (retreating with his new clothes):*

Oh no, sweet maid, I cannot marry thee  
For I have a wife of my own!

There is also a tune for the poem, so that when it has been thoroughly rehearsed as a recitation it can still be practised as a song.

Another poem in which gesture may be used and which can be recited with solo and chorus is 'Shoes and Stockings', which has already been mentioned. There are, of course, many other poems in which the imaginative teacher may find opportunities for teaching action along with speech. This kind of recitation is invaluable for children's classes, and it offers possibilities for an item at a school concert in which pupils who might otherwise never have an opportunity of appearing on the platform may take a part. With older pupils the method would have to be used cautiously, and with adults, probably never.

Parts of Browning's 'Pied Piper of Hamelin' are quite successful, with senior and adult classes. It would be unwise to use the whole poem with them. The language is forced and awkward in places, largely for the sake of facetious rhymes, and the vocabulary content is too high or too difficult for any but advanced students; but there are one or two passages which students always seem to recite with relish, for instance the one which begins:

Rats!

They fought the dogs and killed the cats,  
And bit the babies in the cradles,  
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,  
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles.



or the section describing how the rats came tumbling out of the houses at the sound of the pipe.

Another possible poem in much the same light mood is the one about the roads of England from Chesterton's novel 'The Flying Inn':

Before the Roman came to Rye or out to  
Severn strode,  
The rolling English drunkard made the rolling  
English road . . .

There is no reason, however, why all the verse which is used for oral training should be light verse. In fact, a change of mood is necessary from time to time, because too much humour may cease to be funny. More care is needed in the choice of serious verse, since much of it is so delicate in its feeling or so highly charged with emotion that teachers with any regard for poetry as literature may be unwilling to use it for oral practice. A. E. Housman's collection 'The Shropshire Lad' is a possible exception. Housman's poems are mostly of three or four stanzas only, and therefore of a size to be dealt with in the course of one lesson. They have great simplicity and clarity of expression, but there is nothing naïve about them; nor, on the other hand, do they possess any great depth of emotion. Housman had a sense of pathos, as is evident, for instance, in 'Bredon Hill'; but feeling is never allowed to get the upper hand of form in the poems, and the vein of irony which is often present in them takes the edge off any emotion which might otherwise grow too deep for the poet's taste. These characteristics make many of the poems in 'The Shropshire Lad' very suitable for reading with senior school pupils and adult students. At the same time, the beauty of form and expression which the best of them possess cannot but appeal to students with a taste for literature, and may offer an approach to the study of English poetry as literature. The poem 'Loveliest of trees, the cherry now' deserves particular consideration for this purpose.

In the early years, students should not be asked whether they like any of the poems which are given them to read. Critical opinions have no place in lessons whose purpose is to give training in good spoken English. At the same time, reading verse for this purpose does not preclude students from forming a taste of their own. If this happens it is a tremendous satisfaction for the teacher, but it must happen spontaneously and without prompting. What the teacher must insist on is a good standard of enunciation and expression and, as has been said, he must exercise the greatest care in choosing his materials. There is no perfect universal anthology available. The teacher himself is—or ought to be—the best judge

of what will suit his classes, and must make his selections accordingly.

All the poems which have been mentioned in the course of these remarks have one quality in common, namely, that the balance between verse and subject matter is correct for the purpose for which it has been chosen. None of it is trivial or bad, either in form or in content. On the other hand, none of it is so involved thought or so charged with feeling that it would be beyond the grasp of an elementary class. There is no question here of studying poetry as a literary form. A great deal of harm has been done by teachers of an older generation who were unable to realize this distinction and taught the wrong kind of poetry at the wrong time and in the wrong way. Their efforts were all too often concentrated on dismembering a poem verse by verse, line by line, in order to bring its content within the grasp of a disenchanted class. Some of them did not even take the trouble to have it recited properly. Yet the whole point of verse is that it is intended to be spoken. If they were not so, why should poets ever take the trouble to give rhymes and musical rhythms or printers to set it out in lines and stanzas? The earlier a pupil begins to speak English verse, the deeper will be his appreciation of the sounds and rhythms of English poetry when the time comes for him to study it as literature.

## The Teaching of English in Bulgaria

M. RANKOVA

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Since World War II the study of English in Bulgaria has experienced a rapid and steady growth. At the present moment it is taught as an obligatory subject in a great number of primary and secondary schools, in night schools, and even in kindergartens, while the number of courses for children and grown-ups has grown to such an extent that we find it increasingly difficult to meet the demand for trained teachers. Within the last ten years or so a large number of textbooks for various kinds of learners have been published. A short English-Bulgarian Dictionary (about 20,000 words) has been compiled, and a Bulgarian-English Dictionary is in the press,

while a team of five linguists with the Head of the English Department in the University of Sofia—Prof. Marco Mincoff—are compiling a large English-Bulgarian Dictionary which is to come out about 1962. The best known among the older dictionaries are Prof. Konstantin Stefanoff's English-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-English Dictionaries, published before World War I.

English is taught at all levels with the help of the phonetic method. Instruction begins with the introduction of the sounds of English and the phonetic symbols are taught, but we do not as a rule start with a purely oral course, except in kindergartens. Speech, writing and reading are taught parallel. The sounds of English are introduced gradually, combined with rules of reading and spelling. Thus the first lesson might introduce the vowels [æ] and [ə], the diphthong [ei] and a few consonants. The sound [æ] presents a number of difficulties to Bulgarian learners since there is nothing like it in our language and students have a tendency to substitute [ja] for it. I have found that a careful explanation of the articulation of [æ] and repeated drilling at the very start invariably produce good results, while dependence on imitation only very often does lead to the pronunciation of [ja]. The diphthong [ei] is as a rule easy to learn since there is a very similar diphthong in Bulgarian, though one does find with a number of learners a tendency to nasalize it. This, however, is an individual tendency and not one inherent in Bulgarian speech habits. Wherever it makes itself manifest, however, this tendency is extremely difficult to eradicate.

After the sounds have been mastered, words and sentences containing them practised and questions asked, the teacher introduces the written word. We try to introduce vowels and diphthongs as they occur in closed and open syllables:

a	—	æ,	ei,	ai,	ɛə
i	—	ɪ,	aɪ,	əɪ,	aɪə
e	—	e,	i:,	əɪ,	ɪə
o	—	ɔ,	ou,	ɔɪ,	ɔɪ
u	—	u,	uɪ,	əɪ,	uə

and gradually bring in the consonants along with rules of orthography and reading.

In the first few lessons the texts include only such words as contain the sounds that have been introduced and practised orally. We attempt to give as many illustrations as possible in these elementary lessons, starting with pictures of simple objects and proceeding to pictures illustrating states and actions. The text itself consists of a few simple sentences—statements and questions. Then follow a number of phonetic and other exercises. The sounds are introduced in 6-8 lessons. The phonetic and grammar notes are not



attached directly after each text but form a separate part of the book. They are conceived merely as an additional help to the learner in his preparation at home and not as an integral part of the lesson itself; since with a good teacher the student will seldom have to refer to these notes at home, as he will have mastered the material in class. Moreover, we do not ask our students to repeat the rules when we examine them in class, since we consider the rules as an aid in learning the language and not as an end in themselves. Phonetic and grammar rules are formulated as simply as possible and are taught all through the elementary course in the mother tongue.

Thus an English lesson at the elementary level includes the following stages—illustration of sounds (individually or in simple words or sentences) accompanied by explanations of their articulation, oral drilling, writing and reading. The mother tongue is not excluded in this process, but we try to limit its use as much as possible.

Since the number of hours allotted to foreign languages in the curriculum is very small (2-3 hours weekly for five years) great stress is laid upon the use of methods of teaching that tend to employ the pupils' active attention and participation in classroom work. Therefore good teachers always try to make their pupils talk by asking and answering simple questions from the very start; very soon they call upon them to describe what they see around them and to talk about their daily life; as soon as the Past Tense is introduced story telling forms an important item, while translation from Bulgarian into English is a form of exercise that is employed all through the course.

The reading material for the first three years consists mainly of texts composed or adapted by the author of the textbooks. We attempt to avoid the dry, stilted, and unnatural style characteristic of so many books of this type by using idiomatic and colloquial English, and all textbooks are as a rule reviewed before publication by a linguist whose mother tongue is English. Nevertheless our textbooks still contain stories and articles which are a much better illustration of phonetic or grammar rules than they are of easy and natural English speech and writing. Most of our authors, however, are aware of this weakness and the later editions of their books show some efforts to cope with this difficulty.

The textbooks for the last two years of secondary school contain texts by standard English and American authors, often abridged but not adapted, and accompanied by notes on the authors and the period to which they belong. The more difficult texts are supplied with explanatory notes (in English or Bulgarian) and much attention is paid to the use of idioms.

The chief difficulties that Bulgarians find in learning English arise from differences between the two languages and from insufficient contact with the language as used by native speakers.

The English sound system contains a much greater number of sounds than the Bulgarian (e.g. 12 English as against 5 Bulgarian vowels). Besides, very few English sounds have an exact counterpart in Bulgarian. Thirdly, while most English vowels are pronounced with comparatively lax muscles, Bulgarian vowels require much greater muscular tension; the Bulgarian consonants, on the other hand, are, unlike the English, rather lax. In the fourth place, Bulgarian vowels do not differ in length from one another. I have found that most Bulgarian students manage quite easily to hear and pronounce separate English vowels correctly as far as the quality of the sounds is concerned; it is very difficult for them, however, to form the habit of giving each vowel its proper length in speaking. Some of the hardest vowels for a Bulgarian to differentiate between are [i] and [i:], [ɔ] and [ɔ:]. A good exercise for those troublesome vowels is the repetition of English and Bulgarian words which sound exactly alike to an untrained Bulgarian ear until the student is made to hear the differences and to feel the change in the articulation as he pronounces them. For instance—*tim—team*—Bulg. ТѢМ (meaning *team*—borrowed from the English but pronounced with a dental instead of an alveolar t and a tense i-sound which is neither [i] nor [i:].

Of the consonants it is not, strangely enough, [ð] and [θ] that are the most difficult, although they are not a part of our sound system, but t and d (particularly in final position) and h. Our final t and d (both dentals) are pronounced with so little force and tension that they are quite inaudible to an English ear. In addition, all voiced consonants in Bulgarian become unvoiced in final position, so that a Bulgarian saying *Red Indian* will sound something like *retindian*. When students do that I have found it a great help to repeat the phrase after them just as they pronounce it and ask them if they notice what is wrong. Naturally, it is much easier for them to observe the fault in another speaker, particularly in one who usually pronounces correctly, though they may be oblivious to it in their own speech. So far we have not been able to use tape-recorders in class-room work, but I feel quite certain that they would be of inestimable value to us in developing the pupils' ability to hear, analyse, and correct their mistakes. So far we have been using the pupils themselves as a kind of living tape-recorder—we always require them to listen very carefully to their friends' reading or speech and point out the mistakes they observe.

Unlike most Slav languages, the Bulgarian language has

advanced very far in its development from a synthetic to an analytic structure. Practically all case endings have long since disappeared, remnants of the old nominal inflection being retained only in personal, interrogative and relative pronouns. Even there a growing tendency is noticeable in colloquial speech to use the nominative instead of the objective case, though grammarians and school-teachers still vigorously insist on the difference being strictly observed. Unlike Russian, Bulgarian has a very elaborate system of tenses. These two features which our language shares with English make it easier for students to acquire a feeling for English sentence structure and tense relationships. As regards the latter, however, the existence of an elaborate system of tenses in both languages is only a partial advantage because very few tenses have the same use in the two languages. The greatest stumbling-block is the Present Perfect Tense, which may correspond to at least four different tenses in our language, while those four tenses have other uses in Bulgarian which correspond to uses of the Present Simple, the Present Continuous, the Past Simple and the Past Continuous. We find translation from English into Bulgarian, and more particularly from Bulgarian into English, very useful in teaching the uses of the Present Perfect and the Present Perfect Continuous, but even after years of careful training you will hear Bulgarians saying *I live in Sofia since 1950* or *I have seen him yesterday* instead of *I have lived* or *I saw*. . . .

Though, unlike Russian again, Bulgarian has retained the definite article, its use is often very different from the English, while the absence of an indefinite article makes it extremely difficult to grasp the use of the generic *a*, for instance. Countables, uncountables, and abstract nouns are treated in much the same way as regards the use of the article in Bulgarian. Thus a Bulgarian will say *He is physician*, *The water is liquid*, *The children love (the) sweets* when he means *He is a physician*, *Water is a liquid*, *Children love sweets*. The greatest number of exercises in our textbooks, therefore, are on the use of tenses and the article, closely followed by those on the use of prepositions.

Another peculiarity which a Bulgarian teacher must constantly keep in mind is the word order of the English sentence, since our language has no rigid rules determining word order. The sequence of words in the sentence is much more a matter of personal preference and style in Bulgarian than it can be in English. Thus a Bulgarian writer who is fond of beginning his sentences with the object, for instance, finds it extremely hard and irritating to abandon this habit in trying to write in English.

There are a number of other difficulties of a more specific nature



which cannot be mentioned within the limits of an article. Two years ago the English Department at the University of Sofia published an English grammar for the use of Bulgarian students and teachers where all these problems are treated extensively on the basis of theory as well as by the use of numerous illustrations from standard English and Bulgarian authors. This grammar provides a good theoretical basis for the intelligent student, but quite obviously it cannot solve the problem of how to avoid the pitfalls it enumerates. A book of exercises based on the theoretical material contained in the grammar would be a great help.

While the difficulties mentioned so far can be overcome by means of careful and intelligent instruction, the difficulty arising from insufficient contact with the language as used by native speakers is less easily surmountable. After five years quite intensive study at the university we find our students equipped with a fairly good vocabulary, a thorough knowledge of grammar, and a satisfactory ability to express themselves in writing. As far as their speech habits are concerned, however, the results are far from satisfactory. Their command of good colloquial English is slight and their intonation un-English. We could wish for wider possibilities for young English men and women to come to our country and establish contacts with our youth and for more Bulgarian students to visit England. Bulgarian teachers would greatly appreciate having English lecturers at the refresher courses organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture. A wider exchange of visits between the two countries is sure to have favourable results not only in so far as the learning of English is concerned but also as a contribution towards a better understanding between the two nations.

## ERRATA

See H. Coulthard Burrow's 'Reading Cards and Substitution Tables', in Vol. XII, No. 4. (a) 'Every day', in the top three lines of the second set of cards on page 140, and in the top line of page 141, should occupy one card and not two; similarly, 'every night' in the cards on page 142. (b) 'Monday' on page 142 should read 'Monday'. (c) 'Pronunciation', in line 13, on page 145, should read 'punctuation'.

## AMENDMENTS

- (1) On page 148 of Mr Coulthard Burrow's article (Vol. XII, No. 4), the word *We* in example (e) should be printed a line lower in the same column, and a horizontal line should appear under sleep and at ten o'clock.
- (2) Mr Perren asks us to say that 'primary schools' (page 18, line 17 of his article on bilingualism in Vol. XIII, No. 1) should read 'primary and intermediate schools'.

## Correspondence

We are interested in our readers' ideas and views, and correspondence on articles and other matters is cordially invited, although no guarantee of publication can be given. Please keep to the point and avoid long-windedness.

1. Mr A. W. J. Barron, of Hove (England), writes: Mr L. A. Hill, in the Jan.-March and July-Sept., 1958, numbers of *E.L.T.*, quotes two *Wrong Diagnoses* of mistakes made by students in the Far East. In my experience both these mistakes are fairly common and are not confined to Indonesia. Here are some examples from a European language.

Modern Greek has no [h] phoneme and the English sound is heard by Greeks as their [x] phoneme whose principal allophone is (ç) before front vowels. Thus in both Greece and Cyprus one often hears what at first sounds like [ʃi:] for [hi:] when in fact what is being said is [çi]. Greek has no [ʃ] phoneme. English [ʃ] is usually replaced by [s] by Greeks.

Turkish students are also apt to produce [çi:] for [ʃi:] for the same reason. This is further complicated by the fact that the Turkish [x] phoneme (allophone (ç) before front vowels) is now written with the letter *h* in the modern orthography. At first [çi:] for [hi:] may seem to be a grammatical mistake due to the fact that Turkish makes no gender distinctions; but it is much more usually a phonetic rather than a grammatical mistake and a correction on grammatical lines can be deeply resented.

To return to Greek, practice dictation in Cambridge Examination classes often produces *hats* or *wants* when *hat* or *want* have been read, particularly at the end of a breath-group. Greek has both [t] and [ts] but never finally. The [t] is always dental and, except in certain circumstances in some Cyprus dialects, never aspirated. An English aspirated alveolar [tʰ] at the end of words like *hat* or *want* may often therefore suggest [ts] to a Greek student with the resulting mistake in his written work. In the case of a noun there may be nothing in the context to guide him, and in any case the effect on his ear may be so strong that, at least at L.C.E. level, he may be tempted not to take grammatical considerations into account.

Here is one further example of the same sort. Greek has, as a member of its [t] phoneme, [d] following a nasal. When a Greek says 'he send', therefore, it is just as likely that he is attempting a past tense as that he has omitted the *s* from the present.

2. Dr A. Leonhardi writes from Dortmund (Germany): I read with great interest the review of my 'Dictionary of English Grammar' in *English Language Teaching*, and I beg to make some comments which I hope will be of interest to the readers of your periodical:

1. The chief enemies of learners of a second language are the deep-rooted speech habits of their mother tongue. We try to help our pupils conquer these enemies by teaching them grammar, not in a philosophical way, but chiefly by pointing out to them which colligations of the foreign language differ from those of their native language.

A grammar of the English language for Germans is different from an English grammar for French people, and both of them differ from an

English grammar for native speakers. Both contain linguistic facts which, from the native speaker's view, are usage, not grammar.

I beg to give just one example. In the 'Grammaire-Index de la Langue Anglaise' by J. J. Tavernier (Edition Verbeke-Loys, Bruges), I read in the chapter 'Adjectifs et Pronoms Possessifs': En s'adressant à une personne on emploie rarement l'adjectif possessif:

No, aunt — Non, ma tante

I am sure that from the native speaker's point of view there is no grammar involved in collocations such as: No, auntie; yes, uncle; certainly, grandpa. The instance proves that teaching the grammar of a second language includes teaching usage by precluding possible abuse. After all, is not grammar good usage condensed in rules, and is not good usage unwritten grammar?

2. Teaching a foreign language in secondary education generally includes teaching literature. It is, therefore, not restricted to everyday language but includes literary language. This accounts for the fact that my book contains phrases which, as you say, are still possible, although unusual.

I am very glad that you approve of the design of my book and that you think it will prove useful. On reading your review I satisfied myself that it could be made more useful if literary phrases were replaced by those in general use.

## The Question Box

Conducted by F. T. WOOD and P. A. D. MACCARTHY

QUESTION. Is there any difference of meaning or usage between 'Mr Warburton was a man of four and fifty' and the more usual 'Mr Warburton was a man of fifty-four'? I came across the first expression in 'The Outstation', by Somerset Maugham.

ANSWER. There is no difference of meaning. 'A man of four and fifty' is a rather artificial way of expressing oneself, though perhaps Mr Somerset Maugham used it in this case for the sake of the rhythm. In all normal speech and writing we should say 'a man of fifty-four'. The only example of this kind that I can think of that is used in everyday speech is *five and twenty* in speaking of time, as 'five and twenty to eight', 'five and twenty past six', &c., and even this, I believe, is characteristic mainly of the south of England. In the Midlands and the North one usually hears 'twenty-five to eight', 'twenty-five past six'.

QUESTION. In a German textbook for the teaching of English I found the following sentence: "'I don't want any dinner, and I'll go to bed at once," Peter says to his mother when he arrives home from the fields.' Is 'to arrive home' just another form of 'to arrive at home', or is only one of the two forms permissible in correct British English? I cannot think of any other possibility of using *to arrive* without the preposition *at* when the place of arrival is indicated.

ANSWER. *To arrive home* is the only correct form; *to arrive at home* would be unidiomatic. We say *stay at home*, *live at home*, *dine at home*, *work at home*, &c., where the phrase *at home* indicates the location of some kind of activity, but we *go home*, *come home*, *get home* and *arrive home*. In these constructions *home*



may be regarded as an adverb indicating the destination that has been, or is to be, reached. 'Will you be *at* home if I call at 5.30?' means 'Will you be in the house then?'. 'Will you be home if I call at 5.30?' means 'Will you have returned from work (or from your afternoon's outing) by then?'

As you say, *home* seems to be the only example of this kind of construction; we arrive *at* the office, *at* work, *at* school, &c., and the preposition must be used even with *home* when the word is preceded by a genitive or a possessive adjective: e.g. 'When I arrived at his home/at my friend's home.'

QUESTION. What exactly is meant by 'a whodunit', and what is the derivation of the word? Is it of recent origin?

ANSWER. *Whodunit* is a facetious 'pronunciation' spelling of 'Who done it?' sometimes heard amongst uneducated speakers instead of 'Who did it?'. A whodunit is a crime story in which the main interest centres on keeping the reader in suspense as to the identity of the person who committed the crime. This kind of story goes back at least a hundred years (e.g. Dickens's unfinished novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*) but the word itself is of quite recent origin.

QUESTION. In Somerset Maugham's short story *Gigolo and Gigolette* I have come across the following sentences: 'Stella dived into a tank from the top of a ladder sixty feet high, and as he said, there were only five feet of water in the tank', and then later, 'Madam Stella, the greatest diver in the world, is about to dive from a height of sixty feet into a lake of flames five *foot* deep.' (Italics mine.) Could you please explain the use of *foot* and *feet* after a numeral higher than one? Possibly Mr Maugham wrote *five foot deep* for reasons of euphony (to avoid the jingle of *feet deep*); or was it to characterize the speaker as an uneducated man?

ANSWER. When the numeral and the noun are combined to make a compound adjective (as in a *two-foot rule*) the singular form *foot* is, of course, always used. This is quite consistent with the practice for other nouns, e.g. *a ten-shilling note*, *a two-pedal car*, *a twenty-page pamphlet*. Apart from this, for the ordinary plural of the noun, whether preceded by a numeral or not, *feet* is now the accepted form in Standard English, though Jespersen (*Modern English Grammar*, II, 3.62) gives quotations from Chaucer up to recent times which show that *foot* preceded by a numeral indicating more than one has quite a long history even in educated speech and writing. Today its use is confined mainly to those whose speech is non-standard (though others may sometimes use it colloquially) and to workmen such as carpenters, builders, timber-yard employees, &c., whose job involves the frequent use of linear measurements in feet. With these latter it may have been handed down from older usage as part of the vocabulary of the craft. One has the impression (and it is borne out by Jespersen's quotations) that in modern times *foot* is more frequent when it is followed by a number indicating inches but the word *inch(es)* is not itself used: thus *five feet*, or *five feet eight inches*, but *five foot eight*.

It is doubtful whether euphony had anything to do with Somerset Maugham's use of the word: there is nothing very uneuphonic about *five feet deep*. The more probable explanation is that the speaker had lapsed into his natural mode of expression.

QUESTION. In 'London Calling Europe' I found the following sentence: 'The new motorway will have two thirty-six foot wide dual three-lane carriageways.' The use of *foot* as a plural puzzles me. Can I say 'It is one hundred and twenty-three foot high', 'It is two hundred foot long', &c., or must I say *feet*? And if I must use *feet*, why is it *foot* in the sentence I have quoted?

ANSWER. This is partly covered by the answer to the previous question. You should say *feet*, not *foot*, in the sentences you suggest. The one you quote is very badly constructed; it would have been better to say 'two dual three-lane carriageways, each thirty-six feet wide.'

It may be added that when we get a compound adjective made up of plural number + noun + adjective, the whole combination being used attributively, usage is by no means consistent; sometimes a singular noun is the only idiomatic form, sometimes a plural. Thus we speak of a *three-day-old chick* and a *five-year-old child*, but a *two-months-old baby*. It is very difficult to account for the difference.

QUESTION. What is the question tag that should follow the statement 'I am a teacher'? I know that the most formal is 'am I not?', but I believe most English people say and write 'aren't I?' This sounds most peculiar to me. Is it correct?

ANSWER. 'Aren't I?' is quite correct. The explanation is as follows. As *cannot* becomes contracted to *can't*, so *am not* becomes contracted to *ain't*, but this spelling is never used; it is always written *aren't*, just the same as *aren't you?*, *aren't we?*, &c.

QUESTION. I always have difficulty in teaching my boys the difference between 'to turn round' and 'to turn back'. Will you please explain them for me?

ANSWER. 'To turn round' merely means to turn so that you are facing the other way. If you have your back to the window and then turn so that you are facing the window, you have turned round. 'To turn back' means to turn and go back along the route you have come, or to the point from which you departed. Here are two examples. 'We will go as far as the cross-roads and then turn back.' This means that when we get to the cross-roads we will turn round and re-trace our steps. 'We started out for a walk but had to turn back because of the rain': the rain caused us to turn round and come back home.

You might demonstrate the difference to your pupils by merely turning on your heels but remaining in the same spot (i.e. turn round), and then by walking across the classroom, and when you reach the door, turning and walking back again (turn back).

QUESTION. The 'th' sound seems to be pronounced by no means uniformly by English people, the voiced  $\theta$  being given values resembling z, d, or v, and the voiceless  $\theta$  values resembling s, t, or f. I should be very much obliged if you would say which of these sound variations is more commendable than the other two, as being more widely used by educated English speakers. Does the f/v variation sound more affected and genteel to the English ear than the two others? These questions are of practical value for the teaching of English in view of the inclination on the part of the teachers here (Poland) to favour only one of the three—the f/v variation being in quite special favour recently—and to consider the others as bad or 'uncultured'.

ANSWER. It is rather surprising to find foreign teachers of English apparently taking it for granted that *mispronunciation* of any English sounds could ever be acceptable to the English themselves. Of course, it is ultimately a matter of what standard of accuracy is being aimed at: if, for instance, intelligibility alone is the goal, it is doubtless feasible to give some thought to *which* mispronunciations are less serious than others. But one would surely be unwise to tolerate, let alone recommend ('favour'), faulty articulations which involve (as do those in question) the substitution of one sound of the language (i.e., one phoneme) for another. The short answer to this inquirer can only be: none of

the above substitutions is more 'commendable' than the others: *all* are *wrong*. A tiny minority of people have what is called 'defective speech' in their own language, and some well-educated and adult English speakers in this category are admittedly unable to articulate *th*-sounds properly. But this abnormal speech can hardly be taken into account when discussing standards for foreign teachers and learners.

It is of course quite common for people to be mistaken about the articulations used in a language not their own, and therefore natural that some Polish listeners (in this instance) should have got the impression that English *th* is articulated in a variety of ways by different English speakers on different occasions. Why? Simply because the varying contexts in which *th*-sounds occur in English might well suggest to the Polish-trained ear at one moment *t*, at another *f* or *s*. (It is well known that one seeks to relate, and therefore tends to identify, new and unfamiliar things with that which has already fallen within one's experience. To relate previously unknown things to what is already known is natural and harmless, and is in any case an inevitable mental process. But the tendency to *identify* them must be resisted, especially when, as in phonetic and other linguistic matters, this would obscure essential distinctions.)

Now this is a very different matter from saying that English speakers do in fact articulate the so-called *th*-sounds in these various ways, and it is strongly to be suspected that people receiving such impressions of the non-uniformity of pronunciation among the English themselves have simply been mistaken—especially since their conclusions are likely to have been based on recorded or broadcast voices and thus on the acoustic effect alone of the sounds, under circumstances where these could not be checked by inquiry or examination of the speakers concerned.

The speech of ill-educated adults, and of all small children learning to speak their mother tongue, naturally shows wider divergences from normal than those defective speakers referred to above. Although these categories of people would not normally be taken as a model by the foreigner, and so perhaps hardly concern us from this point of view, the following additional remarks may be of interest to some readers.

Most English children go through the stage of substituting other sounds for *th*, the correct articulation of which is acquired after most other sounds have been mastered (*r* is also learnt comparatively late, as a rule); exceptions are those children who, on the contrary, are passing through the stage of articulating  $\theta/\delta$  instead of *s/z* (this is known as a 'lisp'). Those who have not yet learnt to form *th* properly make all kinds of substitutions, saying, for 'another one', for instance,  $\text{'a'na}\text{'v}\text{'a}\text{'w}\text{'a}\text{'n}$  or  $\text{'a'na}\text{'d}\text{'a}\text{'w}\text{'a}\text{'n}$  (perhaps with dental *d*) or even  $\text{'a'na}\text{'w}\text{'a}\text{'w}\text{'a}\text{'n}$ . A particular child may consistently replace  $\theta/\delta$  by the same faulty articulation, whichever it may be, or he may vary the substitution according to context, saying, for instance,  $\text{'a'na}\text{'v}\text{'a}\text{'w}\text{'a}\text{'n}$  or  $\text{'a'na}\text{'w}\text{'a}\text{'w}\text{'a}\text{'n}$  (with labial consonants), but  $\text{'a'na}\text{'z}\text{'a}$  'dei' (with a lingual articulation to follow). A child will tend to avoid substitutions that produce other words which he knows, e.g., he will prefer  $\text{'a'f'ink}$  to  $\text{'a'f's'ink}$  for 'I think' because he knows *I sink*.

Grown-ups sometimes incorporate childish sound-substitutions in their own speech when talking to children, e.g.,  $\text{'oupa}\text{'n}$  'maufi' ('open your mouth') (notice diminutive suffix), not 'mausi, which could be interpreted as 'Mousie'. On the other hand at least one widely used 'baby'-word has *s* substituted for  $\theta$ , namely,  $\text{'tu:}\text{'s'iz}$  (or  $\text{'tu:}\text{'s'ipe}\text{'gz}$  *toothy-pegs*) for 'teeth'. Observe that the adjacent consonants are *lingual*, as compared again with 'maufi, where *labial* movements are repeated.

However, there is no doubt that *acoustically* the *f/v* substitution is more like



θ/ð than either s/z or t/d, so that on the telephone, for instance, replacing all *th*'s by f or v would most probably not be noticed at all, even by English people. On the other hand, this substitution is *visually* the most noticeable of any, owing to the movement of the lower lip. A t/d substitution for *th* may be phonemically distinct from real t and d provided the speaker articulates them *dentally*, and this is often heard from 'uneducated' adult speakers in America, whereas in England such speakers mostly finish up with a f/v substitution.

A small child counts 'wan 'tu: 'fi: 'fo: and is not bothered by the word *fee*, which he does not know. A bit later he may say 'fwɪ: 'fo: and is still not bothered by the similarity of the initial consonants. But he will not say 'twɪ: because this stands for *tree*. Admittedly 'fwɪ: also stands for *free*, but he may not meet this word till later. When he does, and finds real ambiguity resulting from a sentence such as 'When are you going to be free(three)?', then is the time for the parent to point out the difference, and soon the normal child is distinguishing *free* and *three*—even if the latter is (mis)pronounced θwɪ: to start with. He also soon changes from fɪŋk to θɪŋk on noticing or after having his attention drawn to how others speak (though no actual word FINK is involved to cause confusion of meaning in this case).

QUESTION. Is the meaning of *must* always present or future, or can it be used in the past? Is *ought* in any way the past of *must*?

ANSWER. *Must* is most frequently used in reference to present or future time, but it obviously has a past reference in such a sentence as 'I felt that I must call and see him'. It is also used in reference to past time to express annoyance, in sentences such as the following: 'The car must break down just when we were starting our holidays.' *Ought* has nothing whatever to do with *must*. It is an old past tense of the verb to *owe*, but is now used for both past and present to express duty or obligation. From the examples given above it will be observed that when *must* is used as a past tense it implies some kind of feeling. Where no such feeling is in question it can be used only in the present (though often with a future reference) and the counterpart in the past is *had to*: e.g. *We must leave at ten o'clock, We had to leave at ten o'clock.*

QUESTION. Why are proper names beginning with a double *f* (e.g. Sir Arthur *fforde*) never spelt with a capital? Does this spelling involve a particular pronunciation?

ANSWER. The name *fforde* is pronounced exactly the same as *Ford*. The double small *f* is a substitute for the single capital. It cannot, of course, be used in ordinary English words, and even in personal names it is rare, being an individual or family preference.

QUESTION. I know that *s* is always added to the present tense of the verb for the third person singular, but why isn't it put on to the verb *look* in the following sentence? 'When Christmas comes, in every house the people make the sitting-room look beautiful.'

ANSWER. The reason is that *look* in the sentence you quote is *not* the third person singular of the verb; it is the infinitive, which is, of course, invariable in form. This should be quite apparent if we use the verb *to be* instead of *to look*. The third person singular of the present tense is *is*, but we say 'Make that boy *be* quiet'. When *make* means 'compel' or 'cause to be' it is followed by an infinitive, with the *to* omitted after the active voice, but expressed after the passive: 'His mother made him take his medicine', 'He was made to take his medicine.'

## Book Reviews

### THE ARCHWAY ENGLISH COURSE FOR BURMA, Book 2.

U Myo Min, William Philipps and D. Y. Morgan. 236 pages. O.U.P. Calcutta. 1957. 2 kyats.

Book 1 of this course was reviewed in *English Language Teaching* for January-March 1958 (Vol. XII, No. 2, p. 74). The complete course, covering three years' work, will consist of three volumes.

Book 2 covers the groundwork of structural English needed by Burmese pupils in their second year of learning English. It gives practice in all the tenses except the rarer ones, such as the pluperfect or the future continuous. It has excellent sections on *can, cannot*, on the possessives, and on the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives. Vocabulary increase is systematic. Between 15 and 25 new words (including new parts of verbs already met with) are added in each lesson, and these words are given in heavy type at the end of the lesson in which they occur, so that the pupil's attention is called to them.

There are three particularly commendable features in this book. The first is that help for teachers is incorporated in the class book instead of being given in a separate volume. This help is adequate and unobtrusive, but not excessive. The decision not to produce a separate teachers' book has made sure that it is reduced to the essential. The second is the ingenious device, adopted in many of the earlier lessons, of commenting in the present continuous tense on a picture printed in the text, and then embodying these comments in a narrative in the past. This gives excellent practice both in new structures and in their use in connected prose. The third is the introduction at the end of the book of aspects of Britain. This is done smoothly and cleverly in a passage on climate and the seasons. It is to be hoped that references to Britain and British life, especially on this comparative basis, will be increased in Book 3.

For future editions, a summarized reference list of structures and a consolidated vocabulary list, both if possible with page references, might improve still further an already sound and efficient intermediate book.

### LIVING ENGLISH STRUCTURE FOR SCHOOLS. W. Stannard

Allen. 184 pages. Longmans Green. London. 1958. 4s. 3d. Key 10d.

The parent of this book appeared in 1947; intended for adult students, it was found in practice to be suitable also for younger pupils. It was soon discovered, however, that its use in schools was less satisfactory than with older students. As a result, the present book, a special school version of *Living English Structure*, was prepared.

This school version differs from the original, parent publication in the following respects: 1. The subject-matter of exercises is made suitable for younger pupils; 2. notes to exercises have been rewritten and are much fuller; 3. there are many new exercises; 4. the key is separate; 5. an appendix on clauses and their conjunctions has been added; 6. the original 'Advanced' sections have been omitted. It would be advisable for teachers to bear in mind that the 'Elementary' and 'Intermediate' gradings do not refer so much to vocabulary as to grammar and structure, though the headings are only rough guides. Those who have used

the original volume will be thoroughly at home with this one: its presentation and lay-out are very similar, and the kind of sentence used throughout is roughly the same in content and structure, though simpler of course.

The book contains just on 140 exercises, the majority of which are composed of fifteen or twenty sentences, though a good many run to twenty-five or thirty, or more. This is ample measure, and one that ensures that the book will always be especially useful in the classroom—how very few language textbooks give really enough practice in the grammar and structures to be learnt!

Nearly all the grammatical items and structures that should be mastered during the first four or five years of learning English are covered here, and those that give the foreign learner special trouble are wisely given fuller treatment. For instance, there are six exercises involving the use of 'some' or 'any', no less than twenty-two pages of exercises on 'The Special Finites', and forty-eight pages on the tenses: this is exactly the kind of help that teachers need in order to overcome 'tense-trouble', which English-language learners are rarely immune from, as is well known. Further description of the book is unnecessary, for it follows the pattern of the parent volume, which every teacher makes use of nowadays—if he is wise! But we should add that this volume is illustrated with simple and amusing little pictures, each one telling its story of some everyday event in which one of the practice sentences might occur. There is an excellent appendix of twelve pages on 'Clauses', which many teachers will find unusually helpful, especially for clearing up misunderstandings caused by similar clauses being used for different grammatical functions or by the use of the same connecting conjunctions to usher in different shades of thought, as when 'so that' is used to express purpose or result; though it would be helpful to have emphasized the tense usage with this distinction: 'She bought a book so that she *might learn* English' (*Purpose*), and 'She bought a book so that she *learnt* English well' (*Result*): a separate exercise on the tense usage with 'so that' is needed.

There are three minor points of adverse criticism, two of which can be dealt with when the book is revised, as it will certainly go into very many editions. The title is misleading: there is no special emphasis on 'structure' in the sense in which that word is commonly used nowadays; and recent 'structural analysis' is not drawn on to throw new light on English sentence patterns. Secondly, it is regrettable that such sentences as 'A garden has a tree', 'A teacher is a man or a woman', 'Boots are kinds of shoes', and 'Watches are small clocks', appear in the exercises. Sentences that would never be used by a native speaker should not be used in exercises for pupils and students from other lands who are learning our language. The third point involves distinctions between prepositions, adverbial particles, and phrasal or compound verbs. Two criteria are used in this section: word-order, and whether the word *goes closely* with the noun (or pronoun) or with the verb; but these are used selectively, e.g. 'takes after' (resembles), 'looks after' (cares for), 'makes for' (goes towards), 'looking forward to' (awaiting with pleasure) are classified as verb + preposition, when obviously the particle 'belongs to' the verb, and not to the noun or pronoun that follows. Similarly 'laugh at' is verb + preposition here, though the action 'laugh at' (i.e. mock or ridicule) is quite different from 'laugh at a joke' (expression of a sense of the ludicrous). On the other hand, word-order is not an infallible guide, e.g. the rule given here is that 'the adverb particle can come either before or after the object of the sentence'. But many of them can come only after the object, as in the example given in the book: 'He couldn't get his speech across.' This section of the book therefore needs careful reconsideration. These three points, however, do not really detract from the value of the book for the practising teacher or the lone student. We can warmly recommend it.



**TEACHING ENGLISH TO BEGINNERS.** L. R. H. Chapman.  
139 pages. *Longmans Green*. 1958 6s.

This is a very significant book because it deals with a widespread and extremely difficult problem, the problem of teaching English in large classes and under unfavourable conditions.

Let us at the outset register a protest at the production of a book of this character in a paper cover. It is a book which will for the most part enter into school libraries, where in its paper cover it will be inconspicuous and not long-lived. An extra shilling or so on the price would make little difference in the case of books purchased for a library, whereas if it is to be put in the hands of all the teachers a Department of Education may ask for some hundreds of copies without the stiff cover.

Mr Chapman is an English Teaching Specialist employed by UNESCO and is particularly concerned with the refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan. The specimen lesson on page 5 ff, is 'based upon a first lesson given in an experimental class of forty-six Arab refugee boys with a wide age range of ten to fifteen years so crowded in a small room that they were unable to move freely'. The conditions in the schools with which Mr Chapman is concerned are extremely variable. Some of the buildings erected for school use are quite good. Others, originally intended for domestic purposes, are extremely unsuitable. Some of the teachers are excellent, others less good, and the special defect of the Arab teacher of English, perhaps not a unique one, is a tendency to talk too much, to lecture the class. The teaching personnel is somewhat impermanent. The demand for English-knowing persons in the Middle East is such that a man may very readily get another and better paid job and many take to teaching merely as an interim occupation. These difficulties are not unique, but combined with the extremely active (though very charming) Arab children, they present a major difficulty.

In general the advice given in this book will be very helpful to the more permanent teachers who are working in the better conditions, but we feel that Mr Chapman does not always face up to the requirements of those who are less fortunately situated and less eager or less able to improve their procedure.

What would perhaps be most helpful for the less fortunate would be a set of teaching materials or a textbook of a very simple character which had been tried out and found definitely workable in one of the less good schools by an average, or below average, teacher—a self-teaching textbook, accompanied by only the briefest of Teacher's Handbooks. Together with this there might be a more elaborate 'Teacher's Book' which would tell the more active teacher working in better conditions what better procedures he might use than those laid down as a minimum. Thus Mr Chapman sometimes seems to forget the forty-six pupils. On page 12 he suggests various exercises which require movement in the classroom, such as 'Open the door', 'Go and clean the blackboard'. But in one class which this reviewer can think of it is quite impossible to move in the classroom without causing great disturbance, as the pupils are packed in tight. Mr Chapman also suggests mass drill, e.g. the pupils point and say 'This is my head', &c. He says on page 6 that chorus work must be quiet, and on page 103 'a class of forty reading in unison would merely produce noise'. We would have liked to see more detailed discussion of this dilemma of the over-size class: the bigger the class, the more necessary it is to use mass practice, and the more difficult it is to do so without meaningless tumult. It is possible by frequent interruptions of mass practice to get quietness. When the noise becomes too great the teacher says 'Stop! Now begin again, quietly'. And so the lesson goes on in a series of waves. So also in reading. Silent reading is of very little value in learning to speak

a language. The pupils should mutter quietly as they read and this can be achieved by training the class to read quietly and by interruptions when the noise becomes too great. It is extremely difficult to test comprehension by means of individual questioning in a class of forty-six pupils. The intermittent written answer, whether it be merely a tick meaning 'Yes', or a cross for 'No', or the writing of a single word, gives an instant survey and has the advantage of pulling the class together when it gets ragged.

Mr Chapman places great reliance on cards—word-cards and sentence-cards. One wonders whether this would be practicable in some of the weaker schools. One would hardly expect the teachers in such schools to prepare the cards themselves. Indeed, Mr Chapman writes on page 14 that it would be helpful if printed cards could be provided. In such schools perhaps more of the card material might be put into the textbook.

The writer mentions on page 135 how easily explaining may merge into lecturing. On page 24 he demands 'ingenuity' of the teachers. On page 135 he writes that the teachers should be 'active and lively'. On page 134 that they should 'think independently'. These qualities may indeed be expected of many of the teachers and are found in many of them. But in some cases it is doubtful, and one might fear that the writer is too optimistic. Anyhow, provision is needed for those others—both in the training-courses and (especially) in the textbook.

While this book is an excellent exposition of the best that can be done in these difficult circumstances, it would be even more valuable if Mr Chapman would apply his experience and his facilities for experiment to solving the problem of what can best be done in the less favourable schools and with the less ingenious, active, independent-minded teachers.

Certain minor points may be remarked. On page 7 he says that there is so little material, meaning such a small vocabulary, for initial oral work. Page 11 gives a list of suitable objects—pens, pencils, books, keys, boxes, stones. These pupils, even those in the large camp at Jericho, are living in close contact with highly civilized conditions where there are many adopted words—coca-cola, bank, taxi, doctor, radio, telephone—and many semi-adopted words, slightly different in form or pronunciation, and if different in pronunciation all the more valuable for teaching the difference between Arabic and English pronunciation. But there is no suggestion that use should be made of these. Of course such words are unsuitable for written work at this stage, but that should not prevent their use orally.

On pages 88, 89 and 99 he raises the question of the treatment of Content Words. He objects to the placing of new words at the head of a lesson because the teachers tend to spend a lot of time drilling them merely as words and he emphasizes the importance of teaching word groups. But the ordinary content word which has but one meaning and a simple equivalent in the mother tongue surely does not need the elaborate treatment given to 'soap' on page 99. Such words slip easily into a lesson. The trouble with them is that they tend not to be repeated, that (unlike the structural words and the word groups) simple content words tend not to be repeated and so to be forgotten. There is much to be said for simple vocabulary review as in the old days for these straight content words, and the placing of such content words at the head of a lesson might be supported on these grounds, since then they are very accessible with their context. The swing to contextual teaching of everything and in all cases has perhaps gone too far, though, of course, too much ding-dong Arabic-English drill must be guarded against.

On page 21 he suggests that 'Am I?—Is he?' &c. should be taught with nouns—'Am I a man?—Is he a boy?' It has always seemed to this reviewer that such

inquiries are rather unrealistic and that this verb form would be better taught with adjectives—'Am I tall?—Is he lazy?' &c. ('Is he a lazy?' is a danger).

On page 27 he very rightly emphasizes the importance of forming English letters with the right movements and in the right order and gives a diagram illustrating this point. He might also mention the idea of writing the letters large in the air before using a pen and paper. Is it really necessary to change from italic to cursive writing? Much trouble is caused in teaching English writing to Arab pupils by the peculiar feint ruling which is prevalent in the Middle East. Two lines are drawn very close together and the pupils vainly endeavour to write between them. It is highly desirable that single line paper should be supplied.

*Chapter 9—Pronunciation* is very sound and reasonable. Mr Chapman does not approve of making a fuss about intonation in these circumstances, especially as the rising question tone offers no difficulty to Arabs. It is curious that although he uses numbers he does not use the dot for silencing silent letters.

*Chapter 10—The Tenses.* One cannot but fear that this chapter might lead to those lengthy abstract explanations to which the teacher in the Middle East is so prone. Similarly in the chapter on grammar on page 48 ff the 'explanation merging into a lecture' might too readily result. Might it not be better in these circumstances to have examples learnt as templates as in the old days of Latin grammar, whereas the tenses are perhaps best illustrated by a situation—the present perfect by inquiries as to work done or left undone, or subsequently undone by someone else, and secondly inquiries as to someone's travel and experiences at remote and unspecified dates.

*Chapter 13—Dictation.* We feel that there might be considerably more emphasis on the point that dictation is not a test but a lesson and that all the pupils' papers should be one hundred per cent right. If corrections are necessary surely the teacher has failed.

*Chapter 14 on Composition* is perhaps the best in the book. It gives an excellent transition from answering of questions through guide words to free composition. Nothing could be clearer or more carefully graded.

*Chapter 15.* The advice on the use of the blackboard for explanation and illustration is excellent, but one cannot but wonder whether the weaker teacher can be relied upon to use it effectively where it is a matter of copying from the board. Anyone who has tried the experiment of having a passage copied from the board and an exactly similar passage copied from a book will be shocked to find how much slower and more inaccurate copying from the blackboard is. For the benefit of the weaker schools it might be desirable to put as much as possible of the copying material and written exercises into the book rather than rely on the teacher's handwriting in a badly lit room which was not meant for a classroom.

*Chapter 16—General.* The writer says that the teacher's function is to bring the textbook to life. We would rather feel that the right textbook *would* be alive though the teacher may at times have the task of bringing the printed word into contact with external tangible reality. The book should be the teacher's usher, the source of material for practice, and in these large classes the teacher might be rather like the producer of a play, helping the pupils to learn, polishing the final result of learning. 'The class is a body'—page 138—but it is also a group of individuals. In the small class a group of individuals can be taught as a body and benefit individually, but the larger the class the more necessary it is to rely on assisted, guided and tested learning.

In stating these opinions we are in no way criticizing Mr Chapman's excellent survey of this problem but rather hoping that he will go on to explore this vastly more difficult problem of the large class and the not too good teacher working



in unfavourable circumstances. He has dealt admirably with the top of his problem. We hope he may go on to tackle the lower levels.

**SOME THOUGHTS ON THE STUDY OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.** Paul Christophersen. 30 pages. *Olaf Norlis Forlag, Oslo. 1957.*

How well should teachers know the language they teach? According to Paul Christophersen, the only possible answer is: As well as they can. But since time is limited and perfection beyond most students, what aspect must have priority? All are important, he considers.

Scandinavians well grounded in English at school, Professor Christophersen declares, can acquire at the university a perfect or near-perfect pronunciation. 'A stay in England . . . is not necessary for the purpose of acquiring a good accent.' This is a bold but reasonable claim: the achievement depends, however, upon skilled and regular instruction in phonetics. Christophersen remarks that Englishmen are often puzzled by foreign visitors whose spoken English is seemingly perfect but who show signs of a non-English background. 'Language is a system of social conventions which cannot easily be separated from other social conventions, such as the way one smiles, the way one accepts or rejects the offer of a cigarette, the way one butters one's bread and drinks one's tea, and so on.'

These are harder to learn, as Christophersen says: but while it is doubtful whether such conventions, if conventions they are, are more differently observed as between Englishmen and Swedes than as among Englishmen of various classes and regions, it is undeniable that to 'forge a link' between the language and 'the English reality that it serves to express', the learner must try to get 'the same background knowledge as that of the ordinary educated Englishman, the same knowledge of English ways and manners, English houses, English law-courts, English schools, games, football pools, pubs and so on.' This can be done, it is true, only by living for a long time in an English-speaking environment.

Christophersen maintains with reason also that it is harder for the foreign student to write English well than to speak it well. Only after years of training does the educated Englishman himself become familiar with 'the literary tradition, or rather the tradition of literary expression, which enables him to tell the trite and dull from the unusual and striking, the cliché from the freshly coined phrase, the vulgar from the poetic, and, of course, the awkward or foreign-sounding phrase from the natural English way of putting it.' For years the foreigner must do his reading and writing in English if he is to have the Englishman's 'feeling for the written language'. At the university stage, Language and Literature must be studied together, and Literature is also part of the background which gives Language meaning.

There is much in this thoughtful essay which will interest well-qualified teachers of English everywhere. The author does not, of course, suggest that the riches of English literature are for those who have not reached a certain level of linguistic competence: and therefore his advice on university studies is not universally applicable. Perhaps also he tends to overlook the fact that progress depends on the teachers' knowledge and skill no less than on the methods adopted: by no means everywhere is it easier to learn a good pronunciation than a good style of writing.

**PARRISH POETRY BOOKS.** A. F. Scott, compiler. Book 1, 'Blue Skies', 64 pages. 2s. 9d. Book 2, 'Yellow Sands', 80 pages. 3s. 3d. *Harrap*. 1958. **MYSTERY, MAGIC AND ADVENTURE.** John A. Cutforth, editor. 116 pages. *Blackwell*. 1956. 5s. **ENJOYING POETRY.** E. W. Parker, compiler. Book 1, 177 pages. Book 2, 178 pages. Book 3, 176 pages. *Longmans*. 1957. Each volume, 5s. 6d. **MODERN LYRICAL VERSE.** B. W. Rose and R. S. Jones, editors. 112 pages. *Nelson*. 1958. 6s. **VERSE FOR YOU.** Book 3. J. G. Brown, compiler. 335 pages. *Longmans*. 1958. 5s. **A PAGEANT OF LONGER POEMS.** E. W. Parker and S. H. Burton. 307 pages. *Longmans*. 1956. 5s. 6d. **POETIC HERITAGE.** John Press, compiler. 128 pages. *Deutsch*. 1957. 10s. 6d.

When, if at all, can the learner of English be introduced to poetry in that language? Can anything be usefully served by so doing? And to consider the wider issue: how can we discover a class-room treatment of poetry which will not destroy that response to language, rhythm, sound and imagination, which is very much alive in the child and which makes him a 'natural' appreciator of poetry? What is the relationship between *understanding* and *appreciation*? In what sense does the small child 'understand' his first nursery rhyme which he clamours for again and again? How much, for that matter, do we understand the poetry that gives us pleasure? Need poetry for children be of necessity 'childish' or need it always have a moral-bearing in mind that the child's constant effort is to put away childish things and that conscious morality is an adult phenomenon? All these questions and many more must be asked by the teacher who is thinking of 'doing' poetry with his class.

If you believe that poetry is a worthwhile and essential form of linguistic expression you will give pleasure and purpose to your teaching if you talk about and read poetry in your class. If you yourself see no purpose in poetry do not try to teach it—you will only do more harm than good.

What you read and the way in which you treat it will depend on you and equally upon your class. One can speak here, therefore, only in very general terms. The poem chosen should be within the pupils' 'linguistic' grasp—remembering that the grasp stretches the full length of the arm, and perhaps a bit beyond; and it is surprising how much poetry is in fact 'linguistically' simple. Its subject or theme must be within the physical or emotional experience of the reader. Here we have the merging of the real and the imaginary. The natural pugnacity of boys, and not a few girls, leads with ease to the Battle of Agincourt. Laughter and tears are an integral part of the life of the young and they can appreciate stark tragedy and uproarious comedy in the poetic form. At no other age is nonsense so appreciated. But do not expect them to have sympathy for the subtler forms of relationship between human beings. They are still getting the feel of the world 'in the round', as it were, and they have no patience with the complications of individual human behaviour. Similarly, they may have no patience with the poet expostulating on the beauty of a single flower—all this is for the adolescent and the adult. This may, incidentally, give a clue to those who are teaching adolescents. The questioning mind of the adolescent is different from the questioning mind of the child, it is driven in on himself, and the undertones and overtones of life begin to receive his attention. The adolescent, generally speaking, is the 'natural' romantic and should find such poetry to his liking.

But whether we are reading and discussing poetry with children, adolescents, or adults, there is one criterion which should always be followed—the poetry must be *good* of its kind. The young child responds to a well-established nursery rhyme not because it is childish and ‘namby-pamby’ but because it is good strong memorable stuff which contains the essence of real poetry. Neither can T. S. Eliot unbending over cats lay aside his poetic craft, whilst Edward Lear chose to put his great poetic skill into nothing but nonsense. If children grow up to look upon poetry either as something unmanly or as something outside their comprehension we have really only ourselves to blame. We have not been introducing them to the right poems at the right time, or perhaps we have not been giving them poetry at all, but something which is supposed to suit their tender needs. Poetry is linguistic adventure, and, properly stimulated, the child will find his pleasure in responding to this adventure.

The interested teacher will make it his business to seek out as much poetry as possible, so that his choice of material can be as effective as possible. For this he will probably go to anthologies, and a number written for English-speaking readers have come to hand lately.

The first two books of the Parrish Poetry series, ‘Blue Skies’ and ‘Yellow Sands’, are suitable for young children and attractively produced. ‘Mystery, Magic, and Adventure’ is intended for English-speaking children from about eight or nine upwards and is most intelligently compiled. The choice based on “battle, murder and sudden death”, a good story, humour and strong rhythm is thoroughly sound; it makes language exciting, and the authors, appearing on the last page only, range from Chaucer (in modern idiom) through Shakespeare to T. S. Eliot with a good number of traditional rhymes and limericks thrown in.

‘Enjoying Poetry’, in three volumes (there must be about 300 poems in all), contains a wide selection of the familiar and unfamiliar and there is much good material in it for older children. The compiler has divided the poems into categories such as ‘Birds and Beasts’, ‘Songs’, ‘Country Life’, and ‘People’. This is always a difficult thing to do and is likely to land the compiler into difficulties sooner or later, as it does here. Under which heading would one put the ballad of ‘The Three Ravens’:—‘Creatures Great and Small’, ‘Tales of Long Ago’, or ‘People’? These books will, one feels, need imaginative handling by the teachers if they are not to become dull.

‘Modern Lyrical Verse’ is for young people from 14 to 16. As a selection it seems to me to be uneven, but it does contain one or two winners such as Roy Campbells’ ‘Choosing a Mast’. ‘Verse for You’ and ‘A Pageant of Longer Poems’ have examinations in mind, but they are none the worse for that. They are competent and the arrangement is workmanlike.

And finally for the delight of the teacher himself there is ‘Poetic Heritage’, a collection of just over a hundred poems from the 16th to the 20th century by John Press, who is himself a poet. In his admirably sane preface, the compiler points out that there has been a rich and vital vein running through English poetry and that it has by no means ceased to exist. His selection proves it. His taste is so sure that every excerpt rings true. It is one of the few anthologies that can be read through from the first page to the last and leave the impression that here is the stuff of poetry. It is eminently adult and that is probably why the enthusiast could make good use of it in a class of adolescents with a good knowledge of English.

**A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.** G. L. Brook.  
224 pages. *André Deutsch*. 1958. 15s.

This is another short history of English in a long line of sound and informative



books by such distinguished scholars as Sweet, Wyld, Jespersen, Bradley, Baugh, Wrenn, and Potter. But Professor Brook, while covering largely the same ground, has not only brought us right up to date, but has dealt sagely and judiciously with the problems of assessing the evidence for changes in language, and with many other problems arising from linguistic change. For instance, he does not merely describe the various elements that combine to make up a language and their individual development, but he shows how these elements interact on each other. 'The decay of inflexional endings', he says, for example, 'is an aspect of accidence, but it had a phonetic cause in the light stress carried by such endings, and it is closely bound up with problems of syntax because of the devices, such as auxiliary verbs and prepositional phrases, which were used to replace the old inflexions . . .'. It is this clear understanding of the complexity of language and of the interdependence of its parts that gives this work a particular value.

In addition, linguistic events in the past are not only shown to have had an effect or influence on the language in their own times, but their contribution to developments in modern English is also dealt with in simple detail. Thus, 'The rise of Standard English in the fifteenth century began a movement, which is not yet and probably never will be completed, towards the adoption of a uniform type of speech over the whole of England. . . . Side by side with the decline in importance of the regional dialects of Middle English, we find a new kind of dialect beginning to assume importance: class dialect. In the sixteenth century to speak a regional dialect was no bar to advancement, even at Court. . . .' So we see language as a social activity, and also changes in the attitudes of the users of the language towards it.

The pages on spelling reform are exceptionally valuable: 'the disadvantages of a thorough reform are even greater than the advantages. It is not always realized how many changes would be needed to make English spelling phonetic. . . . In a country with a high proportion of illiteracy, or with few printed books, such a thorough change would be practicable, but the task of rewriting and reprinting all existing English books worthy of preservation would be an overwhelming one. Another drawback of phonetic spelling is the lack of uniformity of the spoken language. . . .' So ably is this problem handled that one would like to go on quoting; but there is, unfortunately, little chance of the more rabid spelling reformers ever seeing this review or the original fair and practical discussion of the problem.

The problem of 'whether to say *It is I* or *It is me*' is also handled with a sounder understanding of the linguistic facts than anywhere else, as far as one reviewer can judge, and the chapter on Semantics is a model of clarity, relevance, and sound knowledge of the working of the instrument, language, and of the use of it.

There are two small points, however, that might be revised for a second edition. Would it not be more accurate to say: 'the separate Germanic languages have had to develop new ways of expressing differences of *time*',<sup>1</sup> as we use Tense as one of the ways of expressing time? And do not prepositions express the relations which exist between *things* and between *actions* and *things*, rather than between *words*?<sup>2</sup>

This book is strongly recommended for all those teachers of English, whether native speakers of English or not, who wish to understand how our language has grown to be what it is, and how changes and developments in the past will often throw some light on problems and peculiarities that we have to deal with today.

<sup>1</sup>p. 38. <sup>2</sup>p. 171.

**LINGUISTIC SCIENCE AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH.**

Henry Lee Smith Jr. 61 pages. *Harvard University Press*. 1956.  
London: *Oxford University Press*. 12s.

'It is the linguist's job,' says Professor Lee Smith in this lecture, 'to bring to the educator the knowledge now in our possession of the *structure* of language—to bring systematically into awareness what the basic sounds, forms, and patterns really are.'

'Thought' and 'ideas', Lee Smith stresses, depend on the nature and structure of the language in which they are expressed. 'The different ways in which languages structure experience, the obligatory categories into which the flux of experience is forced, make speakers of different languages see the world and relationships in the world of experience in quite amazingly different ways. In truth, thought is largely the product of the language we speak; and logic is for us speakers of Indo-European languages quite different from the logic of speakers of Hopi or Chinese or Eskimo.' Unfortunately no examples are given to illustrate this statement: space might have been spared for these out of the fifteen-page account of American vowel contrasts. Translators, and those who still use translation in teaching foreign languages, might well, however, ponder the implications of Lee Smith's words.

Throughout he has chiefly in mind the teaching of the home language, and calls attention to ways in which reading instruction can benefit from the teacher's knowledge of the vowel system and of stress and intonation features. But many people assume that because a child cannot read when he first goes to school, he needs to be taught his own language. This is because 'the system that is language and the derived system that is writing'—D. Abercrombie would speak of 'the same language embodied in different *mediums*'—have been confused. 'Five-year-olds everywhere', says Lee Smith, 'are in full control of the *structure* of their group's communication systems,' and from then onwards they quickly amass new vocabulary.

Foreign learners of a language have, of course, to be taught the structures which native speakers have learned unawares. Patterns of stress in German and English are taken as an example. A 'traditionally educated' speaker of either language cannot tell the other what the difficulties are. Here the linguist can step in, and ease the burden of instruction.

The subject deserves much fuller treatment, but the author has at least pointed to some of the ways in which linguistic science can be of pedagogical use.

**A UNIVERSITY ANTHOLOGY FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS.**

314 pages. *Longmans*. 1955. 6s. 9d.

It is generally recognized in countries where English is the accepted second language that the amount of knowledge of that tongue which is acquired in secondary schools frequently falls far short not only of what is desirable but also of what is necessary if higher studies involving the use of English textbooks are to be undertaken. This selection of prose passages, made by a panel of lecturers in Egypt 'for students of Universities, Higher Institutes and senior forms', goes a long way towards satisfying fully the needs of a teacher looking for a suitable book to use in classes where the pupils have already passed the local Matriculation Examination but have to continue the study of English for general purposes.

The book is divided into six sections—Education and Psychology, History, Science, Literature, &c.—and provides, therefore, suitable reading matter for students of most university faculties as well as covering all the possible interests of those who are taking general courses at teachers' training colleges. It is especially to be recommended to these latter institutions. The passages are graded: each one is followed by a number of exercises, not all of the same type, designed to test the student's powers of comprehension and to give him language practice. These exercises are particularly valuable. It is in the glossary which also accompanies each passage that the one weakness of the book lies. Generally speaking the sense of the words in their context is adequately suggested: but a conscientious teacher—not just a captious one—would feel the need to supplement many of the explanations, and to point out the possible sources of misunderstanding and error inherent in some of them. It is, indeed, upsetting to find the meaning of the word 'protagonist' given simply as 'active supporter', as one does on page 251 of what is undoubtedly a most useful anthology, carefully and intelligently compiled.

**NEW SWAN SHAKESPEARE: MACBETH.** Edited by Bernard Lott. 246 pages. *Longmans Green*. 1958. Paper cover, 4s. 3d., hard case, 6s. 6d.

This is the first volume of a new series which is edited by Mr. Lott; 'Julius Caesar' and 'Twelfth Night' are to follow, no doubt 'in due course'. The series concentrates on the *understanding* of Shakespeare's text, and therefore provides notes that deal largely with difficulties of comprehension. Words not used in modern English are explained, and there is a glossary of words in the play that are outside a 3,000-word vocabulary. There is in this volume an introduction of only four pages, which provides a very brief summary of the plot, notes on a few of the linguistic usages of Shakespeare's time, and some suggestions concerning the play as drama, with a few simple points to bear in mind when producing this play.

There is nothing here about Shakespeare himself, his dramatic art, his greatness as a dramatist, or about the deeper interpretation of the play: the purpose of this edition is to present the play in the simplest manner possible. The text and notes thereon thus occupy the greater part of the book, for it is the reader's 'first duty to understand what the characters are saying and doing'—and how right the editor is to use that word 'duty' and to emphasize that it is what the characters are *saying* that is the important thing! Although it is equally important to imagine what they are doing and feeling, a point which he has not mentioned.

Throughout the book the text of the play is on the right-hand page and the notes, in two columns, on the left-hand page, so that constant page-turning is avoided. There are in fact a hundred and seventeen pages of notes, but they are in much smaller print than the text, and only about twenty-five of those pages are more than half-pages: no one can fairly condemn the book as being overloaded with notes. Indeed those who need these simple explanations will find, undoubtedly elucidate the thought: they throw the light of plain sense on the rich, dark pattern of Shakespeare's complex poetic expression that is so highly charged with powerful feeling and deep passion. Valuable as this series will be to those who need that kind of elucidation, we must admit that understanding the plain sense is not the only thing of importance in the enjoyment of Shakespeare; indeed, for all those whose appreciation of *drama* involves living in the play, the plain sense of the words is secondary to the interplay of personality,



of thought, intention, ambition and will. These notes give us the spade, the earth and the compost; but not the intense colour, the texture and the scent of the rose!

The question is, 'How useful will an edition of this kind be for teachers and students of English as a second or foreign language, when there are so many scholarly editions now available at a reasonable price?' One can only guess, but it may be that those who come to Shakespeare with an imperfect command of English will find this book exactly what they need. Perhaps it could be for many of us the beginning of the enjoyment of Shakespeare, the introductory reading of the play, the first stage in a progressive study of a great drama, or a kind of first rehearsal which later, when the reader's whole mental and aesthetic capacity is used, will lead on to a fine work of dramatic art—one of the greatest. But during the first reading, the first rehearsal, and for many readings after that, there will be very much for the teacher to do: a work of art has to be brought to life; the force and the point of the dramatist's words will have to be *attended to*—'To know my deed, 't were best not know myself'; their own shining lucidity will have to be perceived—'Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell'; their pungency will have to be experienced—'This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues, was once thought honest'; their vividness, new-minted from the common coin of our daily speech, will have to make its impact on our imaginations—'Those linen cheeks of thine are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?'

We repeat, there is much for the teacher of English to do, if this edition is used for an initial study of the play; but what he must do to bring the living, moving spectacle of flesh and blood (and mostly blood!) before the alert and receptive minds of his students—of any nationality—is a more difficult matter, and a task that will call for teaching and aesthetic ability, but above all for restraint.

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*Note to readers.* If you have not yet sent in your answers to the QUESTIONNAIRE, please do so as soon as you can. A welcome avalanche of leaflets has already descended upon us, and we are studying with great care all the information you have given, which is certain to have its effect on our policy. We are, of course, glad to hear from you at any time, but here is a special chance of making your voice heard! So far we have not had many replies from the more distant countries. Pick up your pen now.

# Structural Uses of 'It'

C. MAXWELL CHURCHWARD

(Dr Churchward, author of *A New Fijian Grammar* [1941] and *Tongan Grammar* [1953] was formerly Linguistic Research Officer to the Government of Tonga.)

## PRELIMINARY EXPLANATIONS

1. By the structural uses of the word *it* I mean those uses in which its function, or its principal function, is to contribute to the structure of the sentence rather than to take the place of a noun.

2. Such uses are of at least three different kinds, which may be distinguished and described as *expletive*, *anticipative*, and *discriminative*, respectively. Examples:

- (a) 'It was raining.' Here the pronoun is *expletive*, merely filling a vacancy, so to speak. It serves as the formal but more-or-less meaningless subject of a verb which would otherwise be without a subject.
- (b) 'It was impossible to go.' Here the pronoun is *anticipative*. It anticipates, or represents in advance, the infinitive *to go*. The meaning is 'To go was impossible' or 'It, namely to go, was impossible.' (*To go* is in apposition to *it*.)
- (c) 'It was Fred that helped me most.' Here the pronoun is *discriminative*. It serves to give special prominence to the word *Fred* and thereby to discriminate between Fred and others. It was Fred—not Harry or Tom or George—that helped me most. Practically the same meaning could have been conveyed by saying 'The one that helped me most was Fred' or (with emphasis on the name) 'Fred was the one that helped me most.'

## MORE ABOUT THE EXPLETIVE USE OF 'IT'

3. When *it* is expletive, as in para. 2(a), we are usually thinking either of atmospheric conditions, of time or distance, or of the general situation (or some part or aspect of it). Examples:

- (a) Atmospheric conditions. 'How dark it was at five o'clock this morning!' 'I hope it will be fine tomorrow.' 'It'll be hot this afternoon.'
- (b) Time or distance. 'It was past midnight when they arrived home.' 'It is three years since we met.' 'It is just a month to Christmas.' 'It's a long way to Dublin.'



- (c) The general situation. 'It can't be helped.' 'As it happened, they had gone out for the day.' 'If it hadn't been for you, I should have been killed.' 'It's my turn now.' 'If it were not for the expense, I would go with you.' And similarly in such expressions as 'so it seems' and 'as it were.'
4. As regards its relationship to other words in the sentence, an expletive *it* may be the subject of a verb, as in each of the examples already given, or it may be the object of a verb or of a preposition, as in the following examples. 'I wanted it to rain (*or to be fine*).' '... as if the credit of making it rain were all her own.' (Jane Austen.) 'He had a hard time of it.' 'I must stick it out' (endure to the end). 'Aren't you overdoing it?' 'Tom was hard put to it to find an excuse.'
5. Occasionally an expletive *it* is used in the so-called nominative absolute construction. 'At two miles' distance—it being then about two o'clock—I saw that she hoisted British colours.' (Quiller-Couch, 1898.)
6. Occasionally even the possessive form *its* is expletive. 'There is not much likelihood of its raining tonight.' 'I didn't dream of its being so late; did you?'

#### MORE ABOUT THE ANTICIPATIVE USE OF 'IT'

7. When *it* is anticipative, as in para. 2(b), the word or group of words which it anticipates may be either infinitival or gerundial or clausal. Examples (with the anticipated words printed in italics):
- (a) Infinitival. 'Under such circumstances it is easy *to be led astray*.' 'In any case, it is extremely difficult *to compare real wages in different countries*.' (J. H. Mitchell, 1933.)
- (b) Gerundial. 'It's no good *grumbling*.' 'It's of no use *my talking to you about tumblers*.' (Dickens.)
- (c) Clausal. 'I think it is obvious to us all *that our life is a state of continual tension between freedom and authority*.' (C. J. Wright, 1937.) 'It makes all the difference in the world *whether one puts truth in the first place or in the second*.' (Coleridge.) 'Does it matter *what a man believes?*'
8. The following examples are more complicated. 'It was not easy *to decide which was the better course*.' 'It is idle *to expect that men will give their best to any system which they do not trust, or that they will trust any system in the control of which they do not share*.' (R. H. Tawney, 1921.) 'It is an interesting speculation *what the Italian fortunes would have been if this policy had been maintained*.' (Sir Winston Churchill, 1951.) 'It soon appeared *that the party which was for James was really hostile to the union, and that the party which was for the union was really hostile to James*.' (Macaulay.)

9. The anticipative *it*, like the expletive *it*, may be the subject of a verb, as in each of the examples already given, or it may be the object of a verb or of a preposition, as in the following examples. 'He found it necessary to resign.' (Macaulay.) 'Political corruption makes it easier to resist the demand for reform.' (Henry George.) 'We have it on Dr Bowley's authority that about a third of the total income enjoyed in England and Wales is derived from property rights.' (A. C. Pigou, 1939.) 'You may depend upon it that nothing will be done until the contract is signed.'

10. Occasionally, again, an anticipative *it* is found in the nominative absolute. 'The storekeepers at Levuka and Suva did a lively trade in mourning goods, it being considered the correct thing to dress in black according to our own abominable fashion.' (Lorimer Fison, 1883.)

11. Occasionally, again, even the possessive form *its* is anticipative. 'On its being formally made known to Elizabeth that the sentence had been executed on the Queen of Scots, she showed the utmost grief and rage.' (Dickens.) 'As to its being wrong to dance on Church property, I disagree entirely.'

#### ANTICIPATIVE OR SUBSTITUTIONAL?

12. Naturally there are border-line cases—sentences in which the word *it* may be regarded either as anticipative or as substitutional, or perhaps as both at the same time. 'It does make men of us, this bitter battle of life.' (C. Kingsley.) 'It straggled on for years, this great lawsuit.' (Conan Doyle.)

13. In sentences of this type, however, the anticipative pronoun (if such we may call it) need not be *it*: it may be some other pronoun, e.g., *he*, *they*, *we*, or *us*. 'He is a peculiar fellow, this new assistant of ours.' 'They grow up too rapidly, these little ones.' (Philip Gibbs, 1957.) 'We generally win through in the end, we Britishers.' 'I think it would do us all good—you and me and Edward—to talk about Celia.' (T. S. Eliot, 1950, in *The Cocktail Party*.)

14. These, I submit, are all border-line cases, or transitional types, representing a link between the ordinary or substitutional use of certain pronouns and the purely anticipative use of *it*, as in paras. 7-11.

#### MORE ABOUT THE DISCRIMINATIVE USE OF 'IT'

15. When *it* is discriminative, as in para. 2 (c), the word or group of words which it serves to bring into prominence may correspond to any of the following: (a) the subject of a verb; (b) the object of a verb; (c) the object of a preposition; (d) an adverbial adjunct;

(e) a complement. Examples:

- (a) 'It was Fred that helped me most.' Cp. 'Fred helped me most', in which *Fred* is the subject of a verb.
- (b) 'It is Jennifer that I want.' Cp. 'I want Jennifer', in which *Jennifer* is the object of a verb.
- (c) 'It was the other picture that they were looking at.' Cp. 'They were looking at the other picture', in which *the other picture* is the object of a preposition.
- (d) 'It was in the capital that the first great contests took place.' (Macaulay.) Cp. 'The first great contests took place in the capital', where *in the capital* is an adverbial adjunct (qualifying *took place*).
- (e) 'It was president he was, not secretary.' Cp. 'He was president, not secretary.' (Subjective complement.) 'It was Pat they called her, not Pam.' Cp. 'They called her Pat, not Pam.' (Objective complement.)

16. Additional examples, (a) to (d), all corresponding to the sentence 'I saw you with Cameron.' (a) It was I that saw you with Cameron. (b) It was you that I saw with Cameron. (c) It was Cameron that I saw you with. (d) It was with Cameron that I saw you.

17. In any case, observe, the introduction of a discriminative *it* has the effect of bringing a certain word (or group of words) into association with the verb *to be* (usually in the form *is* or *was*), either as its complement, as in (a), (b), (c) and (e), or as its adverbial adjunct, as in (d): and it is this, of course, rather than the word *it* itself, that gives the word (or group of words) its peculiar prominence.<sup>1</sup>

18. Sometimes the word or group of words which is thus brought into prominence is interrogative, as in the following examples:

- (a) 'Who was it that ran away?' Cp. 'Who ran away?', in which *who* is the subject of a verb.
- (b) 'What is it that you want?' Cp. 'What do you want?', in which *what* is the object of a verb.
- (c) 'Which picture was it that they were looking at?' Cp. 'Which picture were they looking at?', where *which picture* is the object of a preposition.
- (d) 'When was it that he was appointed?' Cp. 'When was he appointed?', in which *when* is an adverbial adjunct (qualifying *was appointed*). 'In which city was it that you were molested?' Cp. 'In which city were you molested?', where *in which city* is an adverbial adjunct (qualifying *were molested*).
- (e) 'What was it that they called her?' Cp. 'What did they call her?', in which *what* is the objective complement of *did call*.

<sup>1</sup>Cp. paras. 17-25 of my article on 'The Unstressed "There"' in *English Language Teaching*, Vol. XI, No. 1.



19. Here, as before, the introduction of the discriminative *it* serves to bring a certain word or group of words into association with *is* or *was*, either as its complement or as its adverbial adjunct; and in this way the word or group of words concerned—*who*, *what*, *which picture*, *when*, *in which city*, or *what*—is given a peculiar prominence.

20. Further, this discriminative use of *it* explains, I believe, the use of *it* (referring to a person) in such conversations as the following. 'There's a man at the door.' 'Who is it?' (Or 'Go and see who it is.') 'It is the electrician.' As I interpret them, these last three sentences are condensed forms of 'Who is it that is at the door?', 'Go and see who it is that is at the door', and 'It is the electrician that is at the door.' Similarly, when in answering a telephone call one asks 'Who is it?' and the person at the other end answers 'It's Jane', these sentences in full would be 'Who is it that is speaking?' and 'It is Jane that is speaking.'

21. In other words, in all such sentences I regard the word *it*, not as substitutional (standing for a noun), but as structural—as discriminative, in fact. (Cp. paras. 1 and 2.)

22. And this reminds me that I have even come across the use of the possessive *its* in a discriminative sense. (Cp. paras. 6 and 11.) 'While settling this point, she was suddenly roused by the sound of the door-bell; and her spirits were a little fluttered by the idea of its being Colonel Fitzwilliam himself.' (Jane Austen, 1813, in *Pride and Prejudice*.) The meaning is, of course, 'by the idea of its being Colonel Fitzwilliam himself that was at the door' (which is another way of saying 'by the idea that it was C. F. himself that was at the door').

#### REVERSED ORDER FOR GREATER EMPHASIS

23. Sometimes the word (or group of words) which is thus brought into prominence is given still greater prominence by being placed first (before the discriminative *it*). 'He it is that shall tread down our enemies.' (Psalm 60.12.) 'Through this wild country it was that Sir Nigel and his company pushed their way.' (Conan Doyle.) 'Her curiosity it was that had kept her alive.' (Hugh Walpole, 1939.)

#### THE INTERPRETATION OF 'THAT' AFTER A DISCRIMINATIVE 'IT'

24. How are we to interpret the word *that* as used (generally) after the word or group of words that is brought into prominence by this use of *it*?

25. Except as in (d) in paras. 15, 16 and 18, it is evidently a relative pronoun. In para. 15(a) it is the subject of *helped*; in para. 15(b) it is the object of *want*; in para. 15(c) it is the object of *at*.

26. Sometimes, indeed, *who(m)* or *which* is used instead. 'When all men were liable to be hanged for stealing a sheep, it was the starving ones who went to the gallows.' (J. Middleton Murry, 1939.) 'He it was, apparently, who took the lower Severn valley from Wessex.' (Keith Feiling, 1948.) 'This it was which gave him such faith and fearlessness in his work.' (James Stalker, 1885.) Nevertheless, *that* is more usual.

27. But what (it may be asked) is the antecedent of this relative pronoun? Logically, it would seem, the antecedent of *that* in para. 15(a) is *it*, the meaning being 'It that helped me most was Fred.' Actually, however, we have come to feel that *Fred* is the antecedent. And similarly in other cases. Hence, when the relative pronoun is the subject of a verb, as in paras. 15(a), 16(a) and 18(a), this verb agrees in number and person, not with *it*, but with the noun or pronoun that is brought into prominence. 'It is partly these things that have made him the strongest man in the Gold Coast.' (*Listener*, 1/3/51.) Note: *have made*, not *has made*, because *things* (and therefore the relative *that*) is plural. 'Whether it is the schools that have failed the Church, or the Church that has failed the schools, it is certainly high time for both parties to co-operate in reversing the drift.' (*Times Weekly Edition*, 23/5/51.) 'It is I that am a slave.' (Carlyle.) 'It's you that are wicked.' (G. B. Shaw, in *Pygmalion*, Act II.)

28. But what about *that* in sentences of type (d), in which the word or group of words that is brought into prominence is adverbial?

29. Here, as far as one can see, *that* is not a relative pronoun (at all events, it cannot be replaced by *who* or *which*), and we seem forced to regard it as a conjunction. On this interpretation, the sentence 'It was on Monday that they came' (to take a simple example) is equivalent to 'That they came was on Monday'; that is to say, their coming was on Monday. This, of course, makes the word *it* anticipative (anticipating the clause *that they came*), as well as discriminative. Perhaps we might say that, as regards the *form* of the sentence, this *it* is anticipative; but as regards the effective *meaning* of the sentence, it is discriminative.

30. This, in the main, is Fowler's view of the matter, as explained under *it* both in *The King's English* and in *Modern English Usage*; and, though I am not quite satisfied with it, I cannot, as yet, see my way through to a better interpretation.

31. Occasionally the word *that*, as used after a discriminative *it*, is dispensed with. See para. 15(e) and the following: 'I believe it was Thompson we saw this morning.' 'It was on the previous Friday he arrived there.' (James Stalker, 1885.) 'It was then I saw the interiors of the houses of which I have spoken.' (Mrs Gaskell.)

## VARIOUS USES OF 'IT' IN THE SAME SENTENCE

32. Naturally the word *it*, occurring twice or oftener in the same sentence, may be used in two or more different ways. Examples:

- (a) 'It seems clear that he had a hard time of it.' First *it*, anticipative; second, expletive.
- (b) 'I have it on good authority that it was Jackson who did it.' First *it*, anticipative; second, discriminative; third, substitutional (standing, perhaps, for *the work* or *the damage*, &c., according to context).

## EXAMPLES FOR FURTHER STUDY

33. First: expletive, as in paras. 3-6. 'It was very dull without my wife and family.' 'I am afraid it is all up with us.' 'The workers would be in a sorry plight if it were not for their protective organizations.' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27/8/42.) 'Men, I have always found, are curiously weak when it comes to taking any sort of moral risk.' (Clemence Dane, 1930.) 'Go it!' 'Don't lord it over them.'

34. Second: anticipative, as in paras. 7-11. 'It was supposed that a man could not be a good parson if he smoked a pipe.' (J. O. Hannay, 1934.) 'I hear it said continually that men are too ambitious.' (Ruskin, 1859.) 'What is it to her whether I am married or not?' (G. B. Shaw, 1914.) 'But, of course, it is no use deceiving ourselves in this matter.' (J. Middleton Murry, 1939.) 'I count it one of the sweetest privileges of my life to have known and conversed with many men of genius.' (Helen Keller.) 'It is not often said, but it must often be thought, that education has been saddled with a new utilitarianism.' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 19/9/52.)

35. Third: discriminative, as in paras. 15-31. 'It must have been a ghost that you saw.' 'Was it in Bristol or in Bath that he lived?' 'It was to talk about the wedding that I came.' 'It is spiritual heroism, and not an endless meditation, that solves the problems of life.' (W. R. Boyce Gibson.) 'It is in the surmounting of obstacles that we find our true selves.' (Edwin W. Smith, 1929.) 'It is only in an intense caring for one's fellow-men that one attains to genuine possession of oneself, and, thereby, to freedom.' (H. J. Laski, 1944.) 'It is most reluctantly that I now give these speeches to the world.' (Macaulay.) 'It is not by his own taste, but by the taste of the fish, that the angler is determined in his choice of bait.' (Id.) 'It was while I was at Trinity College that I made the acquaintance of John Henry Bernard.' (J. O. Hannay, 1934.) 'It is not on how to die but on how to live that one ought to concentrate.' (R. B. Haldane, 1928.) 'It was men not books that he was dealing with.' (E. F. Benson, 1933.) 'It is not the theologian or the philosopher, it is the mathematician and the astronomer, who tell us that in the last resort the knowledge



which science gives us is not knowledge of reality.' (B. H. Streeter, 1933.) 'It is those who look outward rather than inward who find contentment.' (Philip Gibbs, 1957.) 'In such discouraging circumstances it is that I rise to move the second reading.' (Macaulay.)

36. Fourth: miscellaneous, including a few which may be regarded as doubtful or border-line cases. 'It says in the paper that a cool change is coming.' 'Suffice it to say that he was never heard of again.' 'She *would* have it that it was on Monday night that it rained so heavily.' 'He gave it to me hot and strong.' 'It was not that I had committed a crime.' 'It was clear that there was nothing else for it but to walk all the way.' 'It isn't as if they were really poor.' 'Thought may construct the machinery of civilization, but it is feeling that drives the machine; and the more powerful the machine is, the more dangerous it is if the feelings which drive it are at fault.' (J. Macmurray, 1935.) 'It was not till 1838 that the Atlantic was crossed by the unaided force of steam-power.' (T. H. Marshall.) 'Much will depend upon the team which it is now his urgent job to create.' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 12/1/57.) 'It is not what happens to you in life that matters; it is the way in which you face it.' (Lloyd George, 1914.) 'It is not what a nation gains, it is what a nation gives that makes it great.' (Id., 1916.) 'It wasn't a great deal that we could do, for the place was big and rambling and had not been built for defence.' (John Buchan, 1936.) 'It was Grant's experience that it was the irrelevant, the unconsidered words in a statement that were important.' (Josephine Tey, 1951.) 'It is hardly less true than it was in Matthew Arnold's day that there are two systems of education in this country.' (J. Middleton Murry, 1939.) 'It was very pleasant sitting out there in the sun and watching the birds.'

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*Note for Contributors.* Contributors who wish to use phonetic script in illustration of points made in their articles are free to use any variant of the International Phonetic Association system. Other systems should not be used without prior reference to the Editorial Board.

# Teachers' Shortcomings

M. KOBYLANSKI

*(Mr Kobylański is a teacher of English in Poland)*

As I see it, a great deal more attention has been devoted to the standards that learners of English are supposed to attain than to the requirements the teachers themselves are supposed to fulfil. And yet it seems that a definite notion as to what may reasonably be expected of teachers would help us to clear the atmosphere and do away with certain false pretences on the one hand, and make the teachers themselves aware of certain potential dangers on the other.

A great many people, even educated people, assume that a teacher's knowledge of English must be perfect. This is very flattering but at the same time dangerous, because it simply cannot be true. No-one is perfect. Last year a university professor asked me to correct a paper which he proposed to read at an international conference. He was very surprised when I refused and suggested that he ought to consult an English-born friend of mine. It was obviously not a case of excessive modesty, but of a sober estimation of my powers. Some of my colleagues have the courage to admit their weaknesses, others seem unable to go through the ordeal of submitting their written work to natives of some English-speaking country. The effects of that 'surely-I-can-write-English' attitude are disastrous. Because of it we sometimes read in our textbooks of men washing their 'breasts' or of people singing their 'national hymn'—to mention only two howlers that have just occurred.

I should like to make it clear to my readers that whenever I use the word 'teacher' in the present article, I am referring to good teachers working either in secondary schools or at universities.

Let us now take a realistic look at the teacher's qualifications. Obviously enough, most teachers can read silently with good understanding, although they are not unlikely to encounter words and expressions that will be unknown to them, either because they are highly idiomatic, or slangy, or because they refer to some custom or institution unknown to them. When it comes to reading aloud, it may safely be assumed that their intonation and rhythm will always leave something to be desired, even if they have managed—by dint of considerable effort—to master the sounds of English. Owing to the influence of broadcast English and of films, teachers' understanding of spoken English is better now than ever before. As to their ability to speak English, in most cases they will be found to

speak fluently but by no means faultlessly. Apart from incorrect rhythm and intonation, mistakes will be noticed in the use of weak forms, idioms, structures, tenses, and moods, as well as in the choice of words—mainly under the influence of the vernacular.

Writing refined English is an accomplishment which very few foreigners can reasonably look forward to, whether they teach the language or not, and it would perhaps be as well if all teachers became aware of this. It is not surprising, if we remember how few are the educated English writers who can claim complete mastery of their mother tongue. On the other hand, it is often easier to express a thought oneself than to correct a badly constructed sentence and explain what is wrong with it. Rules do not provide sufficient guidance. If they did, Fowler and his colleagues would have very little to do.

I have taught English at different levels for more than eighteen years, but still, when faced with an essay written by an advanced pupil of mine, I am full of doubts. I do not know at times some of the expressions that have been used—perhaps they are not common, but does that mean that they are incorrect? I often feel like a lonely sailor tossed about by waves of mixed feelings in the mighty ocean of the English tongue. My sixty-odd English dictionaries do not always prove dependable life-belts. I shall never forget an essay that I once tried to mark, many years ago. It had been written by a woman whose English was well above the average. I did my best to correct it, then she took it to a friend whose native tongue was English. He found that some of my corrections were justified, whereas others were substitutions of bad English for good. If anyone considers my distrust of a foreigner's ability to correct English style exaggerated, I would suggest the following simple test: Make a group of foreign teachers of English write a composition and then get them to correct each other's papers.

Is it surprising that teachers should have such serious shortcomings? I do not think so. Even though a student beginning to study English at the university is expected to have a good knowledge of present-day English, the syllabus does not usually provide him with sufficient opportunity for practice in colloquial English. Not every graduate can travel to Britain; and then, can even a year's stay there make his English quite English?

Let us also bear in mind that learners' requirements are constantly growing. Europe will soon be covered by one vast Eurovision network and, naturally enough, the already considerable range of students' interests and questions will become increasingly wider. No matter how hard he may try, the teacher will occasionally have to say: 'I do not know'—because honesty has not ceased to be the best policy.



By now I hope to have made it clear that every teacher of English has his limitations and that it is in the nature of things that this should be so. What then is to be done? To begin with, it seems important that the educational authorities, as well as the general public, should become aware of how much they may expect of the language teachers. As to the teachers themselves, they ought to accept the fact that, with very few exceptions, they cannot do without the help of a native when they want to have written work published. And for the information of my more ambitious colleagues, intent on writing forcible and clear English, I should like to say that excellent progress can be made in that direction on the summer courses which the British Council arranges abroad. I have been privileged to attend two of them, held by the Polish Ministry of Higher Education at Oliwa. We were glad to get the answers to various questions, which invariably accumulate in the course of the academic year, and working under the direction of expert British tutors we were able to advance on the long, steep, but wonderful road to English thought.

## In the Classroom

### No. 5: The Use of the Blackboard

H. A. CARTLEDGE and M. R. SNODIN

The blackboard is symbolical of school. Most classrooms are provided with one and there can be few teachers who have not used one at some time or other. Perhaps because it is so common, the blackboard and its uses in class teaching seem to be very seldom discussed by teachers or in teacher-training; and yet, are we sure that we are making the best and most efficient use of this very valuable ally? It might be worth-while thinking about this and asking ourselves whether we are, in fact, getting the maximum assistance from what is, after all, our cheapest and most versatile visual aid.

First, a word about the object itself. There are many different kinds of blackboards from the two-foot square piece of slate perched high on an unsteady easel to those built into the classroom walls, running *all* round the room, with a specially prepared surface which is not always black. Teachers themselves may have little opportunity

of insisting on the fullest and most suitable provision of blackboard space, which can best be done when the school is planned and built, but they can try as far as possible to see that they are provided with adequate blackboard space at the right height and in such a position that every member of the class can see clearly what is put on it, and here it must be remembered that light can play tricks and that it is up to the teacher to test for glare from different positions in the room.

Whilst we are checking this point we might also take a critical look at our own writing on the blackboard. Is it legible to ourselves if we sit in the back row? And even more important, is it legible to the pupil who usually sits there? Many defects of eyesight are first detected in the classroom. The more courageous pupils will tell us when they cannot see clearly what is written. The less courageous will not, but will pretend that they can. It is our duty to make a point of finding out by asking. If the fault lies in our handwriting and not in our pupils' eyesight, then we must do something about it. A little care, a little practice coupled with the consciousness that it is not satisfactory, should soon put it right.

And one more point before we leave our seat in the back row. If what we see on the blackboard, say at the end of a lesson, was reproduced photographically and pasted into a pupil's notebook, would we praise him for the clear structure of his notetaking, his correct spacing and his neatness, or would we reprimand him for an untidy, slovenly piece of work? If we have no control over our blackboard, we have no grounds to criticize a pupil for lack of control over his notebooks. Equally, if we have no control over our blackboard, we are not capable of making it a fully efficient visual aid.

In all class-teaching (and indeed all the remarks made so far are applicable to the class-teaching of any subject) the teacher's main aim should surely be the fairly constant provision and changing of foci of interest which will carry the class along with him in the direction in which he wishes to go. There are many such foci. The teacher himself is of course the most constant, but the good teacher realizes that more will be learnt, and more quickly, the more he can transpose the centre of attention to something other than himself. The textbook, because it in fact creates a number of individual foci (each pupil looking at his own copy) and because it is as unchanging as the contour of a familiar landscape, is an unsatisfactory focus of interest generally, whereas the blackboard, because it is *one* focus, because it takes the pupils' attention from the teacher and because anything may happen on it so very quickly, can become a most satisfactory stimulus to teaching.

The attention is better held too if the teacher actually does his blackboard work in the presence of the pupils and makes it an integral part of his teaching. 'Chalk and talk' is a perfectly sound principle. It is true that we never quite see anything with the same intensity as when we see it for the first time, and even more so when we see it built up in front of our eyes, whether it be a word, a sentence, or a characteristic structure. This is what makes the impact of a good lesson taught with the blackboard so much more effective than a lesson taught from the textbook. It has the advantage, too, of keeping the textbook fresh and stimulating when used as a reinforcement, following the first line of attack.

It is a good principle in modern language teaching to try to ensure that the pupil pronounces a word or phrase correctly before he sees it written down or attempts to write it. Here the blackboard has the advantage, since with it the teacher can delay the appearance of the written word until what he considers to be the right moment to produce it. This is particularly important in the first stages of a language, when a too assiduous concentration on the textbook can play havoc with a pupil's pronunciation.

But in language teaching the blackboard can be used for much more than the introduction of new material. The teaching of structures has already been referred to. A substitution table can be much more effective if it is built up on the blackboard step by step and in collaboration with the class. In the same way short compositions and conversations can become class efforts. For example, a scene is chosen, then the characters. It is decided who speaks first and the class suggests what he shall say. The approved version of his speech is written on the blackboard, and so it goes on. At the end of the lesson it is quite likely that the text may not be very different from that in any textbook (on the other hand it sometimes may) but the class, because it has had a hand in its making, will give it all their attention. The imaginative teacher will be able to think of many ways of making the blackboard the focus of class effort of this kind. This is 'class-teaching' in the best sense of the term, since it gives a sense of linguistic achievement which is not possible to the majority of the class acting individually, and the desire to learn, and ultimately learning itself, depends primarily upon this sense of achievement.

It would be a mistake, too, to imagine that we can use the blackboard in language teaching only by writing on it. There are many occasions when simple line drawings, shapes and diagrams can be used to describe meaning and show relationship, and it cannot be stressed too strongly that here it is not a question of the teacher being an artist. What he has to do in every case is to show the



essentials of an idea in its most economical and simple form, so that it is immediately recognizable, and it is surprising what can be expressed in a few straight or curved lines. The teacher will quickly learn what he can and cannot do in this connection, since here the speed with which it is done is an essential part of its effectiveness.

Without actual demonstration it is difficult to describe the full range of possibility in this direction. The simplest in every respect is possibly the illustration of the word 'dot'; a little more difficult, the illustration of 'straight' and 'curved'. Two lines drawn on the blackboard can provide a deal of conversation, especially if one is longer than the other and drawn perpendicular to it so as to touch or cross it. There is no doubt that there are many meanings which are more vividly expressed in line than in the spoken word, with the added advantage of keeping the mother-tongue equivalent in the background. This process will extend as far as the teacher's ability to transpose meanings and relationships into visual terms rapidly and easily. As soon as the stage of confusion has been reached it must be stopped, as one of the authors discovered when he tried to draw a peacock and the class declared it to be a turkey.

How much or what kind of blackboard work individual members of the class should do depends on a number of factors which only the teacher can determine. In principle, the more the pupils can be allowed and encouraged to take part in the whole process of teaching the better. When, for example, the class is engaged in a class exercise, as has been described earlier, provided the physical arrangement of the blackboard allows and the person chosen knows how to use it, there is no reason why one of the pupils should not write up the final version on the board. But if writing on the blackboard means, as it so often does in dictation, that one student is competing in public with the rest of the class in private, this has absolutely nothing to recommend it. On the other hand, one can conceive of a good conversation lesson beginning with 'John, come to the board and draw a ship in the middle of it'. Later there might be rocks, waves, a lighthouse and so on, and a class more than anxious to talk about and weave stories round a picture done by several of their hands—again, class-teaching in the true sense of the word.

When the teacher has realized the value of the blackboard as a focus of interest, the use it can be to him in the introduction of new material and the building up of structures, the way it can help him to interpret language and linguistic ideas in simple visual terms and the part it has to play in the stimulation of genuine class-work, he will be in a position to use it with confidence and to the full. He will then be well and truly 'lost without a blackboard'.

**CORRIGENDUM.** See Vol. XIII, No. 2, p. 81. The last sentence in the answer to the first question should begin: 'As *cannot* becomes contracted to *can't*, so *am not* becomes contracted to *an't*, but this spelling is never used'. We apologize to Dr Wood.

## Correspondence

We are interested in our readers' ideas and views, and correspondence on articles and other matters is cordially invited, although no guarantee of publication can be given. Please keep to the point and avoid long-windedness.

1. Mr. L. A. Hill writes from Delhi (India): I was very surprised to see, in the review of Menon and Patel's *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language* which appeared in your Volume XII, No. 4, an attack on Dr. Penfield's neurological theory that the infant brain is peculiarly absorptive of language. Your reviewer claims that the adult refugee or immigrant under 30 absorbs the language of his adopted country far more efficiently and more quickly than an infant.

As one who has been a parent (of four children) and a teacher outside England for the past 11 years, I challenge your reviewer to prove his statement, which is, I believe, in direct contradiction to the experience of parents, teachers (both of children and of immigrants) and educational administrators in many countries.

This is not just an academic question: Dr Penfield, an eminent brain and nerve specialist from Canada, where there is ample opportunity to study immigrants and refugees, was consulted by the Indian government on the problem whether it was better to start learning a language in the primary school (i.e. before about 11 years old), or in the secondary school (i.e. after that age). There was no question of starting after adulthood had been reached. Dr Penfield stated that it was better to start before the age of 10 or so, and gave reasons for his statement based on the neurological and psychological development of children at various ages. I believe that most experts on the teaching of languages will agree with Dr Penfield. Many of those in India believe that the surest way to arrest the present decline in the standards of English in this country is to start teaching it at a more suitable age, i.e. in the primary school.

It is therefore a pity that your reviewer should have cast doubt on Dr Penfield's opinion: first of all, the comparison was not between small children and adults, but between small children and bigger children; and secondly, even if it had been between small children and adults, the claim that adults under 30 absorb a language far more efficiently and more quickly than infants would be open to a very great amount of doubt, to say the least of it.

2. Herr P. Schneider writes from Münster (Germany): In Vol. XIII, No. 1, p. 38, your experts do not understand the sentence 'They want to control if/whether the Russians really stop their tests'.

This sentence was probably written by a German contributor. In German 'kontrollieren' means 'to check, test, inspect', not 'to restrain, dominate' as in English. Most probably the sentence should read 'They want to see if/whether the Russians will really stop their tests', and then 'whether' would, I think, be the best choice.

This confusion arises from the misuse of 'kontrollieren' in German newspapers. When the writer wants, for example, to say that a firm is controlling, i.e., dominating the market, in German he states (by the use of 'kontrollieren') that the firm is inspecting it. These writers should follow the rule they have learned at school and which Sir Ernest Gowers in his 'Plain English' gives as 'Prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched'.

The lesson for our language teaching: We must not only train reading and speaking ability, but also practise the most careful translation from one language into the other. Only then will pupils be able to say in a foreign language exactly what they want to say.

[Dr Wood replies: Only the English version of the sentence was submitted; there was no indication that it was a translation, or that the writer was attempting to render the sense of the German *kontrollieren* by the English *control*. Your correspondent is probably correct in his explanation of how the error has arisen, but that, of course, does not invalidate the answer given, namely that, as English, the sentence is quite meaningless. It certainly points to the need for students to realize, and for teachers to impress upon them, that a word in another language which seems to resemble one in their own has not always quite the same meaning. Accuracy in translation is essential.]

As your correspondent suggests, if *see* were used, *whether* would be preferable to *if*, since the question is left open.]

## Question Box

Conducted by F. T. WOOD and P. A. D. MACCARTHY

QUESTION. A grammar book which I use for my teaching of English gives the sentences 'We lived in a farm' and 'I like to live in a farm'. Isn't *in* the wrong preposition here?

ANSWER. It is incorrect to say that one lives *in* a farm. We say that a person lives *in* a farmhouse, but *on* a farm.

QUESTION. Is there any difference of meaning between *ought to* (should) + *be*, and *ought to* (should) + *have been* in the following sentences? 'I wonder where he's got to. He ought to be here by now' (Philmore). 'He ought to have been here by now. It was after five. He was bound to come; after all, he'd promised.' (Somerset Maugham.) 'Even though night-driving conditions were bad in the black-out, he should have been here by this time.' (Dickson Carr.) 'He ought to be here by now', 'They should be home by now' (F. T. Wood. *Moderna Språk*, Dec., 1955).

I suppose that *ought to have been* refers to the past; but if so, why is *by now* used, and not *by then*, and *by this time* instead of *by that time*?

ANSWER. First we may notice that there are two slightly differentiated meanings of *ought to* (should). The first is something akin (in the realm of conditional clauses) to the open condition, in that it admits of a doubt. *He ought to (should) be here by now* may mean 'He probably is here, though we cannot be sure'. —



Indeed there are some sentences where it could not possibly do so: e.g. *A taxi will get you home sooner than a bus.*

The position may perhaps be summarized as follows. If only one person is involved, then *home* refers to that person's home. The person in question may be represented by the subject (*I am going home, Mr Smith is not at home*), by the object (as in the sentence given in the preceding paragraph), by the object of a preposition (*There was a letter waiting for her at home, i.e. at her home*), or by no actual noun or pronoun in the sentence but by the speaker himself (*All my books are at home*). Where more than one person is involved it may refer to any of them, though the situation or context should make it clear which one is intended. For instance, in *The teacher sent the children home* it is obviously the children's home that is meant, but in *The policeman took the lost child home*, though it probably means the child's home, it could mean his own (the policeman's) home. When a gentleman takes a young lady home it may be that he escorts her to her home (e.g. after a dance) or takes her to his home, i.e. to introduce her to his family. If a person says *I have just had a letter from home*, or *Things at home are not too easy just at present* he is referring to his own home; but if he asks a friend *Have you heard from home lately?* or *How are things at home?* it is his friend's home that he means. The situation or the context must always be taken into consideration.

QUESTION. Is there any difference of meaning between 'I am going to the theatre tonight' and 'I shall go to the theatre tonight'? I believe it is quite normal English to say 'I am going on my holiday next week/next month, &c.' Could *I shall go* be substituted in such sentences?

ANSWER. *I shall go* (or *I shall* followed by any other infinitive) is the future tense. It denotes a future situation that is thought of as arising either because of the intention of the speaker (as in the sentence you quote), or in the natural course of events, as *I shall be forty on my next birthday*. *I am going* (or *I am* followed by any other present participle) suggests that the arrangement has already been made. Because of this difference, two consequences follow. First, where 'the natural course of events' is concerned, and there can be no question of intention, *I am*+the participle cannot be used. We cannot say *I am being forty on my next birthday*, or *I am going to be forty*. Secondly, where intention is implied the future tense is rather less definite than *I am*+the participle, since an intention is often somewhat 'in the air' and may not be fulfilled: contrast *I shall go to Switzerland for my holiday next year* and *I am going to Switzerland for my holiday next year*. As you remark, it is quite normal English to say *I am going on my holiday next week*. In such a sentence we should not feel it appropriate to substitute *I shall go*, because if the holiday is so near it is something more than a vague notion or intention; the presumption is that it is already fixed and arranged for then.

QUESTION. What is the meaning of the word *off-peak* in the following phrase: '... all designed to stimulate travel in the off-peak periods.'?

ANSWER. 'Peak period' is the term used to denote the period when the greatest number of people are travelling, and when therefore the trains, buses, &c., are very crowded and find it difficult to cope with the crowds. 'Off-peak' periods are the other periods, when fewer are travelling. The terms, however, are not restricted to transport. They may be used of electricity supplies or of holiday resorts. In the former case the peak period is that when there is the heaviest demand on current, in the latter when the influx of visitors reaches its height, so that the hotels and boarding-houses have difficulty in accommodating them.

QUESTION. Could you please explain for me the phrase 'dust up their laurels' in

co-ordinated are longer it may well be required. The ruling of R.C.R. is as follows: 'Where more than two words or phrases occur together in a sequence a comma should precede the final *and*: e.g. "A great, wise, and beneficent measure".' But then it goes on, 'The following sentence, containing two conjunctive *and*'s, needs no commas: "God is wise and righteous and faithful".'

It must be borne in mind, however, that R.C.R. is not, and never set out to be, a final authority. Its object was to ensure uniformity of practice when a manuscript was split up between several compositors.

QUESTION. When can the prop-word *one* be left out in such sentences as 'Yes, said the other (one)'?

ANSWER. You will find an article entitled 'Some Observations on the Use of the Prop-Word *One*' in *E.L.T.*, Winter 1952, which may throw light on the general question you raise. As to the more specific question of its use with *other*, it is very largely a matter of feeling in individual sentences, but the prop-word is not generally used with the plural (although we may say *the other one* we do not normally say *the other ones* unless the reference is to things that are thought of in pairs, like shoes, gloves, &c.), while with the singular it is not used if the reference is sufficiently clear without it, or if *other* can possibly be understood as a pronoun (= the other person) and not an adjective.

QUESTION. To what extent is it correct to use *whose* as a relative pronoun for things, apart from personification? I have in mind sentences such as the following, from Southey: '... the clock whose huge bell may be heard five leagues over the plain.'

ANSWER. It is difficult to lay down any rule. Presumably a writer uses *whose* rather than *of which* quite spontaneously because it seems to him the right word to express his meaning; so the question really is, what prompts him to use it? From an examination of a number of examples it would seem that where *of which* detaches the feature, *whose* identifies it more closely with the thing of which it forms a part or with which it is connected. Thus in Southey's sentence, to the person who hears it 'five leagues over the plain' the bell is not merely a piece of the clock's mechanism; it is the important and essential feature by which he becomes aware of the clock; indeed it almost *is* the clock. A similar explanation holds, I think, for the following sentences. 'A lake whose surface reflected the sunlight' (the surface, to all intents and purposes, *is* the lake); 'trees whose boughs bent under the weight of fruit' (the laden boughs are the striking characteristic of the trees, by which the attention is attracted); 'houses whose neat front gardens announce the characters of their occupiers' (the gardens are thought of as inseparable from the houses, and the most noticeable feature of them); 'cars whose owners are obviously people of substance' (the cars are thought of as inseparable from their owners—almost as an extension or expression of their owner's personality and social status). This explanation may not seem very helpful, but as was stated at the beginning, it is a matter of subjective factors, not of grammatical rule.

QUESTION. Is the following sentence correct? 'If you see Mr Smith, ask him when I might find him at home' (i.e. at Mr Smith's house). I ask the question because I had always understood that *home* must refer to the subject of the sentence or the clause, in this case *I*. Is this not correct, and if not, when exactly may we use the word *home*, and such phrases as *at home*, *from home*, &c.?

ANSWER. The sentence you give is quite correct. There is no foundation for the belief that *home* can refer only to the home of the person denoted by the subject.

For this the perfect infinitive of the verb *to be* cannot be used, though of other verbs it can (e.g. *They ought to have finished the work by now*, i.e. they probably have finished it, though we cannot be certain that they have.) The second meaning is rather like the rejected condition in that it states something (though in this case an obligation instead of a condition) that is not fulfilled: he ought to . . . but he is not. For this we may use either the present or the perfect infinitive of any verb, including *to be*.

The difference between them is this. The present infinitive (*He ought to be here*) thinks of his expected presence at the time of speaking, irrespective of when he arrived, or ought to have arrived. The perfect infinitive (*He ought to have been here*) thinks of his arrival with, possibly, his continued presence, but not necessarily so; he may have left again. It depends on the situation or context. For instance, a telephone inquiry to a shop about an order that has not been delivered may elicit the reply, 'The roundsman left here nearly an hour ago, so he ought to have been to your house by now.' This obviously does not mean that he is expected still to be there; rather that he was expected to have called some while ago and to have gone again.

Finally as to the use of *by now* and *by this time*. First, *by now* (and the same is true of *by this time*) is not really present; it means 'now or before'. That is, it denotes a past period of time extending up to the present; it can therefore take not only a perfect infinitive but also the perfect tense of a finite verb: e.g. 'Our team had scored two goals when I left, and they have probably scored another by now' (i.e. from the time I left up to the present moment). Secondly, two of your sentences (those from Somerset Maugham and Dickson Carr) appear to be examples of what is sometimes called 'substitutionary speech', where the writer (or in a story one of his characters) records the thoughts that passed through his mind in the past, and so uses the past tense and the third person pronoun, as he would for reported or indirect speech, but at the same time imagines himself (or his character) back in that situation, experiencing it again, and so preserves the direct form of questions, and the same temporal adverbs as he would for direct speech. E.g. 'He sat and thought: what should he do? He could not go out on a night like this.' (The thoughts that actually passed through his mind were, 'What shall I do? I cannot go out on a night like this.'). The sentences in question seem to be of this type, and this may account for *now* and *at this time*.

**QUESTION.** Are the following two sets of sentences grammatically correct? If so, why is the present tense used with *ago*? (a) 'It must be nearly three years ago'. 'It's all so many years ago, what odds does it make?' 'It's a long time ago. I guess I didn't pay very much attention.' (b) 'It must have been ten days ago'. 'It was a long time ago'. 'That was nearly thirty years ago.' All these are taken from actual printed sources.

**ANSWER.** Both sets of sentences are correct, though it should be added that the present tense can be used only when the verb is *be* or *seem*. We can quite well say 'It seems a long time ago', or 'Was it only in 1952 that he died? It seems longer ago than that.' In this last sentence, indeed, it would be impossible to use anything but the present tense; and for a very good reason, which applies also to your first set of sentences. Those with the present tense denote the position at the moment of speaking, and the word-group containing *ago* has something of an adjectival force. *It is so long ago* means 'so many years have elapsed since then'. (Notice that the use of the perfect tense in this interpretation of the sense connects it with the present, not with the past.) Those that use the past tense, on the other hand, refer to the time of the occurrence, and *was* means something like 'occurred'.

QUESTION. Is the second part of a hyphenated word written with a capital letter when it occurs in headlines or titles?

ANSWER. Yes, e.g. the title of John Buchan's novel *The Thirty-Nine Steps*.

QUESTION. Can a clergyman be addressed in speech as 'Mr Reverend', or must we say 'Sir', or 'Mr John Smith'?

ANSWER. A clergyman is addressed in just the same way as any other person, i.e. as Mr So-and-So, or more deferentially as 'Sir'. By one of his own parishioners he might be addressed as 'Vicar' or 'Rector'. A Roman Catholic would probably address a priest as 'Father', but a Nonconformist minister is never addressed as 'Minister'; it is always Mr (or Dr) So-and-So. 'Mr Reverend' is never used; to an Englishman it would sound absurd.

In introducing a clergyman, either to a friend or to an audience at a meeting, you could call him 'The Reverend Mr Smith' or 'The Reverend John Smith' (but never 'The Reverend Smith'), but after that you would refer to him as Mr or Dr Smith, as the case might be.

QUESTION. Danish grammars teach that what is pronounced as one syllable should not be divided in print or in writing, but I have often seen this rule broken in English novels, e.g. turn-ed, ask-ed. Is this permissible?

ANSWER. It is better not to do it, but the Oxford University Press's 'Rules for Compositors and Readers' (often referred to by the initials R.C.R.) states that 'to avoid uneven spacing, one-syllable divisions of two letters are permissible', and this would presumably cover the cases you cite, though it is, of course, concerned only with the printed page, where the ends of all lines must be uniform. In writing there is not the same justification. But in any case, the important point is not whether such a word as *asked* should be divided at all, but that if it is divided it should be done in such a way that the first part is a complete syllable: i.e. *ask-ed*, not *as-ked*.

QUESTION. Is the word *sir* spelt with a capital letter in such expressions as 'Yes, sir'?

ANSWER. No, a small letter is used. The word is written with a capital only (a) when it is a title, as Sir Thomas Browne, (b) in the greeting to a letter, *Dear Sir*.

QUESTION. Is it a safe rule to use *elder* and *eldest* only of brothers and sisters, or must it be used also for seniority?

ANSWER. It is normally used of brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, and there is also the term *elder statesmen* (those commanding respect and authority because of long experience). To denote seniority outside the family circle it is used only in the plural, as *You should respect your elders*, where it is always understood to imply a considerable difference in age, not merely those who are older by a few months or even by a year or so. The noun *elder* as it is used in the Presbyterian Church can be left out of the discussion, since it is no longer felt to have anything to do with age, though that, of course, was the original sense of it.

QUESTION. Would you recommend a comma before the last *and* in an enumeration? The learned seem to disagree on this subject.

ANSWER. It is difficult, if not impossible, to lay down any hard and fast rule, though the belief that a comma should *never* precede *and* has nothing to recommend it. The comma is perhaps best omitted when *and* joins single words, like 'Red, white and blue', or 'Shelley, Keats and Byron', but when the units thus



the following quotation? '... Mlles. Sayers, Spain and the rest had better dust up their laurels; here is a new challenger.'

ANSWER. *Dust up their laurels* is a variant of the more usual phrase 'look to their laurels', i.e. make an effort to maintain their reputation, renown or pre-eminence in the face of a formidable challenge.

QUESTION. In Vol. XIII, No. 1 of *E.L.T.*, I find on p. 6 the following sentence: 'English creates, *quicker* than most things, a common air to breathe.' Is not *quicker* in this sentence an adverb modifying the verb *creates*, and should it not therefore be *more quickly*? Or is *quicker*, in this case, closer connected to *English*?

ANSWER. As you state, the word in question is used adverbially, and *more quickly* would perhaps be preferable, but of recent years there has been a tendency to use *quicker* as the comparative degree of the adverb, especially when (as seems to be the case here) it is felt to mean *sooner* rather than 'at a greater speed'. A much earlier example (well over a hundred years ago) is to be found in Washington Irving's story of Rip Van Winkle: 'Weeds were sure to grow quicker in his field than anywhere else.' Incidentally, one might point out that in your own question you use *closer* as an adverb instead of *more closely*.

QUESTION. In the December issue of *Coming Events* (p. 54) I found the following sentence: 'Visitors should also see "David Copperfield's Garden", the spot where the young David rested before resuming his journey to Kent'. Would it make any difference if the definite article before *young David* were omitted, and if so, what would the difference amount to?

ANSWERS. Parallels to the example you quote are to be found in the titles of several biographical works published during the past few years: e.g. *The Young Melbourne* (Lord David Cecil), *The Young Winston Churchill* (J. Marsh) and *The Young Elizabeth* (J. and F. Letton). In each case the explanation is the same: the article is used to distinguish more definitely the early part of a life which we normally think of in its entirety, extending over a much longer period. The novel *David Copperfield* takes us up to the manhood of its hero, so we can think of David as he is depicted when he was a child, when he was a youth, when he was in his early manhood, and finally after he was married—in fact, several David Copperfields. *The* indicates a particular one of these.

The adjective without the article would not have this distinguishing function; it would merely indicate that the person in question was young, but would not isolate this particular aspect from the rest of his life. Examples are to be found in the title of Van Druten's play *Young Woodley* and in *David Copperfield* itself, where, in Chapter VI, Steerforth exclaims, 'I say, young Copperfield, you're going it!'

*Young David Copperfield* could, of course, also mean 'David Copperfield, Junior', to distinguish him from his father, whose name was also David.

QUESTION. How is it that, while we must speak of 'the most laborious *of* my boys', and 'the most industrious boy *in* the form', we can say 'The East End is the poorest district *of* (or *in*) London'?

ANSWER. In your first sentence the boy in question is one from amongst several; therefore we must use *of*, just as we should say 'the biggest of the three', 'the eldest of his sons', &c. In the second sentence the form is thought of as a corporate body *in* which each of the boys has a place, so we ask a schoolboy which form he is *in*, or say that he is the most industrious boy *in* the form, just as we should speak of 'the most skilful player *in* the team'. After *member*, however, we should have to use *of*, since a member is an individual part of a larger whole. A district may be thought of either as a locality on its own and complete in itself,

but situated within a larger area, in which case we should use *in* (just as we should say 'Verona is a town in Italy'), or merely as a sub-division of the larger area, in which case *of* will be used.

QUESTION. The word *chipolata* (pl. -s) is recorded in Daniel Jones's *An English Pronouncing Dictionary* but I cannot find it in any of the ordinary dictionaries. Would you kindly explain what it means? Again, in the *Observer* (August 31, 1958) I read, 'Visiting do-gooders from international bodies lead us to believe that the East is dirty. . . . ' What is a 'do-gooder'? That is another word that does not appear to be recorded in any of the dictionaries.

ANSWER. It is rather surprising to find that *chipolata* is not in any of the ordinary dictionaries. It is the name given to a kind of sausage mildly flavoured with herbs or spices. A 'do-gooder' means, presumably, someone who is zealous to improve people or conditions, i.e. to do good to them. It is not a normal English word, and was probably made up by the writer of the article. In its context it seems to have a slightly disparaging ring about it, suggestive of an attitude of superiority, patronage or condescension on the part of the person so described.

QUESTION. How can I explain the singular article before *few* in the expression *a few quiet days*, when the noun that follows is a plural?

ANSWER. In so far as *a few* always implies more than one, it is, of course, notionally plural, which would account for the plural noun. The singular article is of quite long standing (it goes back to at least the thirteenth century) and possibly originated because the number was thought of collectively, as a single group. We might draw a parallel with *a dozen eggs*, *a hundred young pigs*, where we also have the singular article and the plural noun. *A dozen* and *a hundred*, of course, denote definite numbers, whereas *a few* denotes a small unspecified number. Historically the two cases are not really parallel, since *dozen* and *hundred* were both originally followed by *of* (a dozen of eggs), whereas *few* never was, but the constructions are, for all practical purposes, parallel today.

QUESTION. In 'The Question Box' in Vol. XIII, No. 1 (first question) it is stated that the word *no* cannot be used adverbially before adjectives of the positive degree except in the case of *no different*. But what of St. Paul's statement 'I am a citizen of no mean city'? Surely *no* is not adjectival, qualifying *city*. The more I examine it the more I feel that it is completely adverbial, and modifies *mean*. Indeed, there seem many such examples: 'This is no uncommon practice', 'no unlikely event', 'no unexpected development'. Is this a correct surmise, or is there a grammatical classification which sets these cases apart?

ANSWER. Your contention presumably is that *no* reverses the meaning of the adjective, not of the noun, and that therefore it must be adverbial; but I do not find this view very convincing. In such expressions as *no mean city*, *no light task*, *no uncommon occurrence*, *in no small measure*, &c., it would seem that the adjective and the noun are to be taken together as a kind of compound noun expressing a single notion, in just the same way as the noun and its prepositional adjunct make a compound, the whole of which is qualified by the adjective *no*, in sentences like 'He is no friend of mine', 'This is no job for an amateur', 'This is no climate for an invalid'. In certain cases the approximate meaning of the noun and the adjective together could be conveyed by another simple noun: e.g. 'It was no unexpected occurrence'—'It was no surprise'. And in the sentence *It was no mere coincidence* the word *no* could not possibly be adverbial, for the sentence obviously means that it was *not* a coincidence, whereas to make *no* modify *mere* would mean that it *was* coincidence, but not a mere one. This would clearly be nonsense.

QUESTION. In *E.L.T.* XIII, No. 1, p. 13, there occurs the sentence 'It is worth emphasizing the importance of analogy in language learning'. Both H. W. Fowler and Margaret Nicholson, in her *Fowler's Dictionary Brought up to Date*, disapprove of this use of *worth*. According to these writers we should say either 'The importance is worth emphasizing' or 'It is worth while emphasizing the importance'. Yet I have found the so-called 'wrong' construction in Jespersen's *Essentials* as well as in his *Philosophy of Grammar*, and also in *The Listener*. What are your views?

ANSWER. The construction is also condemned by Treble and Vallins in their *A.B.C. of English Usage*, but their arguments against it, like those of Fowler and Margaret Nicholson, are based on logic rather than usage, and seem rather pedantic. The fact that it is widely used by good writers and speakers would seem to justify it, even if it does defy strict grammatical analysis.

QUESTION. Which spelling is preferable at the end of a verb, *-ise* or *-ize*?

ANSWER. There is no consistency amongst English writers, though the small volume *Rules for Compositors and Readers*, issued by the Oxford University Press, contains a long list of the verbs most frequently used, with recommended spellings. The 'rule' is a very complicated one, depending on etymology, which the average writer cannot be expected to know, and, as G. H. Vallins remarks in his book *Good English: How to Write It*, 'the ordinary man does not care a brass farthing, and uses *-ise* for them all.' Some (e.g. *advertise*, *compromise*) must have *-ise*, and in view of this there is something to be said for following the example of Vallins's 'ordinary man' and writing them all with *-ise*. Otherwise take the spelling of the Oxford Dictionary as a guide.

QUESTION. Should I use 'period' or 'full stop' when giving a dictation? And 'quotation marks' or 'inverted commas'? In the case of these latter, should both pairs be placed above the words they enclose, or should the second pair go just below?

ANSWER. An English teacher would always say 'full stop'. It is doubtful whether the word *period* would be known to an English schoolboy or schoolgirl in this sense. 'Quotation marks' or 'inverted commas' seem equally satisfactory, though most English teachers call them by the latter name. (Incidentally it might be noted that only the first pair is inverted; the second pair are the right way up.) Both pairs are placed above the words they enclose.

QUESTION. I cannot make out the work that the preparatory word *it* (complement) does in the sentence 'Have you seen it snow?'. Am I right in calling it an idiomatic intrusive word?

ANSWER. In the first place, it is not really correct to call it a complement; it is a subject, in this case forming part of an 'accusative with infinitive' construction used as the object of the perfect tense *have seen*. (Cf. 'Have you seen him run?'). Nor is it really intrusive. There is no accepted name for it, but it might be called a formal subject. It is very common in statements and questions regarding the weather or atmospheric conditions: e.g. 'It is raining', 'It is very cold today', 'It snowed all day', 'It is very sultry, isn't it?'.  
 QUESTION. I have read in a newspaper, 'The dinner should have taken place last night.' Would it not be better to say 'was to have taken place'?

ANSWER. The two are equally acceptable, though perhaps 'was to have taken place' suggests more definitely an arrangement that did not materialize. *Should have* sometimes suggests uncertainty rather than a definite negative: e.g. 'When

does your cousin arrive in England?"—"He should have arrived last night" (implying 'but I don't know whether he did or not'). The context, however, will usually make clear the meaning that is intended.

QUESTION. Which form is better, Thomas Becket or Thomas à Becket? Where is Becket situated?

ANSWER. Thomas à Becket is the more usual, though if the surname alone is used, then merely Becket (e.g. *the shrine of Thomas à Becket*, but *the murder of Becket*). Becket (or Beckett) is still found as an English surname. There is a place by the name of Becket in both Devon and Berkshire, and the surname may be derived from these, but P. H. Reaney (*A Dictionary of British Surnames*, Routledge, 1958), thinks it more likely that it is a diminutive of the Old French *bec*, and means 'a little beak, or mouth', or else that it means 'at the beck head' (i.e. at the head of the stream).

QUESTION. What is the reference in 'pouch on side', in Jaques's well-known comparison of the world to a stage in *As You Like It*?

ANSWER. The sixth age of man is described as 'the lean and slippered pantaloons'. The old pantomime character of Pantaloon always wore slippers and spectacles, and had a pouch (i.e. a small bag) hanging at his side, presumably to carry small articles of property in.

QUESTION. (a) I have read in a book (printed in Spain) 'Since when do you read English newspapers?'. Is this correct, or should it be 'Since when have you read English newspapers?' (b) Grammar books generally say that *since* is used with the present perfect, but quite often I have found it used with the simple past tense, e.g. 'It is a long time since I saw him'. Palmer, in his *Grammar of English Words* (p. 183) says, 'Note the use of the perfect tenses', and then gives examples with the past, e.g. 'How long is it since you were in London?'

ANSWER. (a) *Since when have you read* is the correct form. (b) You have misunderstood the rule regarding the use of the perfect. It is the *main* clause, or the verb upon which *since* depends, that must have the perfect tense; *since* itself is followed by something denoting a definite point of time in the past (e.g. 'I have not seen him since then/since last Christmas/since the end of the war'). If it is a clause that is used for this purpose, then the verb must be in the past tense: 'I have not seen him since we were at school together/since he retired from business/since he moved to Norwich'.

There are, however, two exceptions to these rules. (i) When the main clause is concerned with the length of time from the point in the past up to the time of speaking (i.e. the present 'sum' of it) then the present tense, and not the perfect, is used in this clause. Your own two sentences illustrate this. Another example is 'It is almost fourteen years since the war ended'. (ii) When the point in the past from which we reckon is the beginning of something that has been going on continuously ever since, and is still going on, then the perfect tense can be used after *since*: e.g. 'Since I have been at this school we have had three different headmasters'. We could not say 'since I was at this school', for that would imply that I am no longer there; but it would, of course, be possible to say 'since I came to this school'. Similarly we have 'Since I have been ill my son has visited me every day', implying that I am still ill, that the daily visits started at the beginning of my illness and have continued ever since, as against 'Since I was ill my son has visited me every day', where the implication is that I am no longer ill, and that the daily visits started from the time of my recovery.



## Book Reviews

**HOW TO WRITE ENGLISH.** H. Jarrett. 160 pages. *Collins Comet Books*. 1958. 2s. 6d.

Part I: Grammar; Part II: The Choice of Words; Part III: The Practice of Writing—Letters, Summaries and Reports, Essays and Articles comprise the main parts of this little book. In Part I Time and Tense receive thorough treatment and provide useful help to all who wish to use English correctly; the rest of Part I—Sentence Structure and ‘Stops’—is much less helpful. The remainder of the book is instructive, somewhat conventional, and written no doubt for those whose mother tongue is English.

**ENGLISH COMPREHENSION EXERCISES.** R. Tong. 83 pages. *Cassell & Co.* 1958. 5s.

This collection of reading passages and comprehension exercises contains Description, Narration, Exposition and Argument, Recollection and Reflection, and Poetry: thirty-one passages of prose and five of poetry. These are selected for use in classes working for School Certificate, the majority of the passages having an African context. The book would therefore have special value in Africa; it would also have value, though not the same value, in schools outside Africa, especially in Great Britain, even though some of the passages are not exceptionally well written.

The questions on each passage are mostly of the usual kind: ‘Explain the meaning of the following words’, ‘Form nouns from . . .’; ‘Suggest a title . . .’; ‘Give synonyms or antonyms for . . .’; ‘Suggest three adjectives for . . .’. These are merely ‘drill’ exercises; the other questions usually make an attempt to clarify understanding and stimulate the imagination; but for African secondary school pupils much more needs doing to foster a deeper understanding and sympathy for the life that is presented in these extracts, and a more precise appreciation of the language used.

**A SECOND BOOK OF ENGLISH IDIOMS.** V. H. Collins. 256 pages. *Longmans Green*. 1958. 12s. 6d.

Mr Collins’s first book of English idioms was reviewed in this publication, Vol. XII No. 4. This second book has the same lay-out, mode of presentation, and aims; it provides us with explanations, sources, and comments on 1,000 idioms; and for ease of reference these are all listed on pages 1 to 27 and in an index of eleven pages in the alphabetical order of the significant word or words in each idiom.

This is a most useful book of reference, and no English library should be without it; furthermore, every teacher of English as a foreign language should have a copy; but one emphatic warning is needed: these idioms must not be used indiscriminately, and some of those not classified as ‘Colloquial’ or ‘Slang’ cannot be used in certain contexts, particularly in rather formal contexts. For instance, ‘in two two’s’ is not marked ‘C’, nor is ‘to wear the breeches’, ‘to be up a tree’, ‘I wouldn’t touch him with a barge pole’, ‘to be all there’—to pick a few only out of the last seventy idioms. This warning must be given because many adults, learning English, like to lard their conversational dish with current or near-current idioms, often with curious and unexpected results. This book,

therefore, is *safe* only in the hands of someone with English as his mother tongue. Others should consult the nearest English-speaking person to make sure that usage of an idiom is acceptable. With idioms *usage* is often the prime factor.

**MODERN TEACHING IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS.** J. C. Gagg, 192 pages. *Evans Bros.* 1958. 10s. 6d.

This is a most unusual book. For one thing, it begins with 'The Future of Teaching' and ends with the words 'In a school where they (good teaching and enjoyable learning) exist, the children are members of a community—of the finest kind'. For another thing, it presents a picture of sound up-to-date teaching looked at with the keen eye of common-sense, but not the supposed common-sense which says to so many young teachers in their first school: 'Get down to brass-tacks and forget all that you have been told. Just knock in tables, spelling, and such like, and you'll be all right!'. This book is in the van of the attack on dullness; it is based on the sound practical view that teaching, if it is to be effective, must be lively, active and enjoyable.

Part One deals with children: 'What are children really like?'; with teaching: 'What is good teaching?', and with a new looking forward to real education: 'What are you going to do about it?', and with 'Some practical ideas'.

Part Two deals with 'Helping Children to Speak . . . to Read . . . to Write . . . and helping Children with Arithmetic'. Four chapters on *helping* children! This is a pointer to the real education that will shortly be with us—at last! With the proviso, of course, that teachers all over the world will buy this book and try out many of the wise ideas it describes so simply and clearly; the use and application of these ideas in the classroom are not impossible, and certainly not difficult in African schools.

Part Three covers 'The subject called Geography . . . called History . . . called Nature Study', 'Music, Art, Handwork' and 'other Subjects'. And there is a Postscript: 'One Hundred Questions for *You*.' The ground is well covered; and it has been laid out in detail here for a very good reason. Though there is not very much which specifically deals with language teaching, yet the whole of the language learner's education is an integral part of his language learning. To think of language learning as a separate skill unconnected with the pupil's other skills, and his mental effort as apart from his mastery of all the other subjects in the school curriculum, and apart from all his conscious experience, is to be completely misguided. This book enables us to see the life of the children as a very active and often enjoyable process. Language teachers should be aware of this energetic life and aware of the part that their language teaching can play in it—and this goes for language teachers not only in Africa but everywhere, though there are still too few countries whose teachers and educationists have the wisdom to recognize what is wise.

**ENGLISH CONVERSATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS.** Jean O. Judd. 127 pages. *Harrap.* 1958. 8s. 6d.

This book presents forty-three conversations in modern colloquial English that might well take place in various commonly encountered situations. The English of these conversations is authentic and natural but happily free from idioms that are likely soon to become dated. The conversations are short enough for the material of each one to be quickly learned, yet each conversation is full enough to cover a certain type of situation convincingly.

The author neither simplifies the language of real life nor does she fall into the error (so often exhibited in books of this kind) of overloading the dialogue with

too broad a collection of expressions that might belong to a particular situation. With considerable skill she fills a short conversation with useful material that is natural in its context.

Words and phrases of any difficulty are glossed in French, German, Spanish and Italian. It is undoubtedly a pity that so useful a book gives no assistance to the student who does not know any of these four languages. There are many students from Asia and Africa to whom this book would be valuable who might be deterred from buying it because so much space is devoted to assisting the European student. Definitions or alternative renderings in simple English would increase the book's appeal to these students.

In her preface the author, an experienced and evidently skilful teacher, explains how use may be best made of the book either in class or by the private student. Recordings of the conversations—of particular value to the private student or the class working overseas—are obtainable on magnetic tapes and long-playing records.

**WALL SHEETS.** Helen Coppen. 44 pages. *National Committee for Visual Aids in Education*, London. 1957. (Reprinted from *Visual Education*, Oct. 1957.) 1s. 6d.

This is a practical handbook, as the author says. It discusses the choice, making, protection, and storing of wall charts and pictures (excluding the 'pin-ups' found in nursery and infant schools), and also ways of using them in the classroom. We are told in an appendix where the materials (inks, papers, brushes, &c.) can be obtained, and how much they cost in August 1957. There is a short bibliography.

Teachers who like to help themselves will find here invaluable and clearly worded guidance and many stimulating suggestions. Wall pictures are, in general, not enough used in language-teaching. Ideally, they should be produced to go with a textbook course, but there will always be a place for good, clear, supplementary pictures, and many courses are not provided with wall pictures at all. Many teachers thus have the chance of making their own pictures, to suit local and particular needs. They will find Mrs Coppen's booklet a great help.

**BLACKBOARD DRAWING.** J. Stewart Crichton. 31 pages. *Nelson*. 1954. 3s. 6d. **BLACKBOARD WORK.** H. G. Ramshaw. 60 pages. *Oxford University Press*. 1955. 5s.

'Unfortunately I'm no good at all at drawing.' How often one hears this said by teachers who admit how useful it is to be able to draw intelligibly on the blackboard. Few of us are endowed with the graphic wit and dexterity of a Fougasse or a David Langdon, famous cartoonists who can convince and instruct by means of a few deftly placed lines. The marks we ineptly make, whether on the blackboard or on paper, add up to very much less. But if there is one thing that holds children's admiring attention, it is a blackboard sketch created before their eyes. They are easy-going critics, whose imaginations fill in a lot. That gives us a chance.

The main thing is observation and practice, and these two books offer us, admittedly in a static form, something to observe.

*Blackboard Drawing* shows how basic shapes (circle, square, oblong, &c.) can be arranged and built up into birds and animals, fish and flowers, and how matchstick people can be made to walk, run, kick, catch, throw, signal, and climb. There are clowns and teddy-bears, policemen and nurses, perambulators, castles, engines, caravans—a miscellany of what one might need to illustrate a

story. They are not all easy to draw, but the stages of the drawing are for most of them clearly shown.

There is little or no text in *Blackboard Drawing*, which consists of illustrations. *Blackboard Work* has a lot of text, and detailed advice is given on the mastery of basic shapes and lines, as well as on the building up of objects, animals, people, and action scenes from them. There are short sections on the use of the blackboard in the teaching of various subjects, including languages.

Advice and illustration are of little use, of course, unless the teacher who 'can't draw' practises. Some of the practice may be done on paper at home, but there must be blackboard practice also, as H. G. Ramshaw says more than once. Practice makes perfect, and the reward is a keener class. Both these books can usefully guide such practice, and every teacher should study them who wishes to develop blackboard skill.

**AURAL AIDS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING.** Peter Strevens. 44 pages. Published for the British Council by *Longmans, Green and Co.* 1958. 3s.

Mr. Strevens, an experienced language teacher with an expert knowledge of audio-electrical equipment, has written an admirable booklet which deserves the widest possible circulation. It is concise yet remarkably comprehensive. As an experienced teacher the author sees very clearly what the most useful functions are that the gramophone, the tape-recorder, the radio, and the sound film may perform. As an expert on equipment he knows what suitable instruments are available, how to choose between them, how to buy them, and how to look after them. He very wisely assumes that his readers share none of his technical knowledge and gives simple but adequate explanations of how these instruments work and what is involved in keeping them in a state of efficiency.

This booklet will be of special value to purchasers and users of equipment in hot humid places remote from the manufacturers. There is an excellent exposition of how the proper 'tropicalisation' of equipment should be carried out. The purchaser is warned against certain types of component and told how to specify suitable components with the right forms of protection against humidity and heat. He is advised what spares to order and the importance is explained of obtaining a circuit diagram and component-list to make repairs and upkeep straightforward. Three shillings spent on this booklet may well save a buyer many pounds and save expensive equipment from rotting in disrepair.

It is, however, a pity that space was not found for a paragraph of advice on the care and storage in the tropics of short-playing records, which warp very readily and are sometimes damaged by mould. (The reviewer recommends storing them flat between sheets of glass.)

The booklet ends with a full and valuable catalogue of records suitable for use in teaching English overseas.

**DRAFT SYLLABUS IN ENGLISH FOR THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.** C. S. Bhandari. 46 pages. *Government Central Pedagogical Institute, Allahabad, U.P., India.* **GRADED READING DRILLS FOR BEGINNERS.** R. Mackin. 89 pages. *East Pakistan School Text-book Board. Dacca.* Rs. 1/4/-.

The *Draft Syllabus* is intended for the first three years of English (Junior High School Classes VI, VII and VIII), and, as its title implies, it is intended to be tried out in these classes. It consists of a careful, detailed grading of the elementary



stages of English. Each page of this language grading is divided into three parts. In the first, the numbered teaching point appears; in the second, one or two examples of its use in context; in the third, brief instructions about its teaching. For example, on page 18 we find:

84. *Every* (Temporal)  
(Habitual Present).

I get up at 8 o'clock every day.  
I begin my work at 5 every day.  
My school begins at 10 every day.

*Begin to be practised with work, school, lessons and class.*

At the end of the graded teaching points for each year there are suggestions for Oral Work, Reading, Writing, Grammar, Poetry and Vocabulary.

Certain objections have been made to this type of syllabus—that it is too detailed, too rigid; that it makes the teaching wooden; that it hampers the well-qualified teacher. It is also possible to question some of the details of this particular syllabus. Is it wise, for instance, to defer questions till after the fortieth item? Can the indifferent teacher be expected to hold out so long when he and the class can use no English but simple statements? What is the purpose of the Grammar sections, when the pupil is learning to use the grammar of English through his graded lessons? Why poetry at this early stage?

We do not propose to dwell on these criticisms. Syllabuses are of many kinds. Some contain too little, some too much. Some are bad, others are good. The fact remains that if this syllabus is followed faithfully by the teachers for whom it is written their pupils will receive a valuable grounding in the essentials of English structure, so far as morphology and syntax are concerned. (There is no direct reference to phonology in this syllabus. Perhaps the teachers already have some help in this matter.)

The *Graded Reading Drills* are presumably intended for schools in East Pakistan. They follow a carefully graded syllabus of the same type as Prof. Bhandari's, and their object is to lead the beginner from speaking the graded language to reading it. The author evidently has two things in mind. First, the importance of learning the parts of a language orally before they are read or written. Secondly, the need to proceed systematically from oral work to reading. These are two essential principles of language teaching and Mr Mackin has done well to provide this additional help for schools.

Towards the end of the book there appear a number of English nursery rhymes, for oral practice and later reading. One is tempted to suppose that the content of some of the rhymes is pretty remote from East Pakistan. However, they have a certain rhythmic quality and it may be that their appeal is universal.

Next come Pronunciation and Spelling exercises, containing a list of the main segmental phonemes of English (British R.P.), and their various spellings. This section is likely to be particularly helpful to teachers and their pupils.

Finally, there is a sensible and practical vocabulary list.

In general, this book seems to be eminently helpful and easy to follow, and pupils in East Pakistan will acquire a valuable foundation for speaking and reading English if their teachers use it and the syllabus on which it is based.

## ENGLISH INTONATION: ITS FORM AND FUNCTION.

Maria Schubiger. 112 pages. *M. Niemeyer*. Tübingen. 1958. Dm. 10.

This is a well-written and scholarly book which all serious students of the subject, and these include all serious students of English, should get hold of and work

through with care. It is not the 'comprehensive survey' which Dr Schubiger says she aimed at giving, but it does cover a great deal of ground without wasting words, and its appeal is to learner as well as to linguist.

Schubiger has based her analysis on observation of 'Educated Southern English', which she rightly says is disseminated far and wide by the B.B.C. The sense-groups into which she divides utterances correspond to tone-groups, employing a variety of tone-patterns. Your reviewer would question, however, whether 'what characterizes a tone-pattern is above all the intonation of the last fully stressed syllable' (p. 9): this seems an over-simplification, especially when we consider patterns such as that in *Don't you under-stand* and *Where in the world have you been*. It is also doubtful whether (38) intonation's 'main function is to give voice to the speaker's attitude'. This is one of its functions, but that of 'tonetic stress', which is 'largely of an intellectual nature' (78), can hardly be less important.

Objection might be raised also to a number of smaller points: for example, that pauses are marked by punctuation (3, note 1), that 'the head and body of a tone-group necessarily form a *descending* scale' (15), and that exclamations are always emphatic (56). It is uncertain whether stress itself can be said to 'engender' a modification of the tone-pattern. Descriptions of the attitudes which some intonations are said to express are inevitably subjective, though one can generally hear, of course, what one has been told is there to be heard. Words like 'sometimes' and 'occasionally', referring to frequency of usage, are also based on personal impressions. As for 'important' words (26, 80, 84), said to be marked by intonation in various ways, how many words in most utterances are unimportant? Certainly not the allegedly empty form-words (80).

Part One deals with 'Intonation Proper', and illustrates the terms nucleus, head, tail, &c. Each sub-section contains a number of practice sentences, and useful advice is given on how to teach the glides, among them the rise-fall and the rise-fall-rise, though the author admits that 'English can very well be spoken correctly and naturally without the latter' (21). There is a very good section on statements of various kinds, and commands, exclamations, questions and enumerations are also well covered. The greatest originality of the book, however, lies in Part Two, 'Intonation Conditioned by Sentence-Stress'. Whether Schubiger is right or wrong when she says that variations of the kind seen in *Are you happy* and *Are you happy* are a matter of stress, it can hardly be doubted that 'it is not so much the stress as the concomitant intonation that is responsible for the acoustic impression made upon the listener' (77). And whether or not she is right in saying that 'the tone-patterns which make up a sequence are combined in such a way as to form as near as possible a replica of the simple pattern that would be used if the sentence were not divided' (86), this remark and the examples that follow shed light on the way English sentences are built. There are interesting and helpful paragraphs, too, on intonation and grammar.

The study of English intonation has still some way to go, and writers on the subject differ on many points and use some technical terms in different ways, though they have much also in common. Schubiger's book advances the study and is an important contribution. Students of English need not be afraid of it because, like other books on intonation, it is partly controversial. The examples are nearly all good examples of usage, and what is said about them is usually unexceptionable and often penetrating.

There is a fairly full bibliography. Two 33 $\frac{1}{2}$  r.p.m. gramophone records, spoken by P. A. D. MacCarthy, illustrate the tone-patterns themselves, and are obtainable from the publisher or (in Britain) from Blackwell, Oxford, or Heffer, Cambridge.

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO COLLOQUIAL IDIOM.** W. J. Ball.  
259 pages. *Longmans*. 1959. 6s.

Mr Ball's former book, *Conversational English* (1953) is well known as a scholarly yet readable treatment of the subject. It discusses the differences in vocabulary and syntax between written and spoken English and the relation of this to national character. In the concluding chapter he gives suggestions for teachers. In the present volume he presents some 1,500 idioms classified under 79 headings, together with Exercises appended to each group.

This *Practical Guide* will undoubtedly prove extremely useful both to the teacher and student; moreover, it may turn out to be the embryo of a future volume which will be an essential occupant of every linguist's bookshelf. The remarks below are not to be taken as derogatory criticisms but as suggestions for future elaboration and improvement.

Colloquialisms are not a luxury, a mere show-off, for the foreign learner, but a necessary instrument for the conversion of speech into behaviour: they induce that relaxed atmosphere which is essential for that personal and emotional relationship of which words form only a part. They 'defrost': indeed, a reversion to non-colloquial and literary language is one of the commonest techniques for extending 'the frozen mitt' to the aggressively friendly person.

The difficulty of the foreign learner is to select those colloquialisms which are (1) suited to his stage of linguistic mastery, and (2) express no less and no more than the emotional intensity required. The colloquialism is in a sense a shibboleth. Extreme slanginess in one who does not speak the language fluently or correctly awakens in the listener the same resentment as does the uniform or school tie to which a wearer is not entitled. There are those idioms which may be used by any speaker in any conversational context, others which may be used by any moderately accomplished speaker, and a third category which the foreigner will doubtless need to understand but should never use unless, indeed, his English is flawless. Mr. Ball gives a warning in a few of these cases, e.g. 'What's he after?', 'Chew the fat', 'Go to pot', 'It gives me the willies'; but this book would be far more useful if every idiom had a raised <sup>1</sup>, <sup>2</sup>, or <sup>3</sup> affixed to it indicating its status:

Tell a tall story <sup>1</sup>  
Pull his leg <sup>2</sup>  
Have him on <sup>3</sup>  
Stuff and nonsense <sup>1</sup>  
A cock and bull story <sup>2</sup>  
... , my foot! <sup>3</sup>

Similarly where the idiom is expressive of emotion, the learner needs some indication of the degree of intensity: Cut up rough (1), Go up in the air (2), Go off the deep end (3), It makes my blood boil (4). . . .

In any classification, the more numerous the headings and the finer the analysis, the better. Collating this book with Mr Ball's former volume we find a number of headings which might with advantage be added: Apology, Approval/disapproval, Comforters, Contempt, Emphasizers, Failure/success, Gratitude and Thanks, Ill/healthy, Promise/oath, Neutral replies (Is that so, &c.), Permission/forbidding, Refusal/acceptance, Vague terms (What d'ye call it?, Gimmick, &c.).

Some of the headings in the present list might well be split, e.g. Like (Persons)/Like (Things). 'Events' is no better as a heading than 'Objects': it might become Anticipation/certainty.

The Exercises are not wholly satisfactory. Some of them are, even to an English-knowing reader, rather difficult: e.g. 'Explain, "He feels he is in a rut," "He has had it in for me"': translation would be easy, but explanation in

non-colloquial English is far harder. One needs to distinguish the Exercise (Drill) and the Test. The learner would, we feel, prefer the Drill, e.g. Numbered Completion exercises, the numbers referring to numbered idioms in the preceding text: 'Read the exercise finding the answers; then read filling in from memory':—

Now that he is (head man<sup>4</sup>) he remembers many (old grievances to be revenged.<sup>7</sup>)

I have just had a (serious quarrel<sup>9</sup>) with Tom

4. top dog; . . . 7. old scores to wipe out; . . .

9. dreadful row.

If the Exercises were in smaller type it would make the volume easier for use as a reference book—and it would make it possible to have more exercises: there can never be too many.

This is a book with a future.

**ENGLISH SENTENCE PATTERNS and ENGLISH PATTERN PRACTICES.** Robert Lado and Charles C. Fries. 324 pages and 338 pages. *University of Michigan Press*, Ann Arbor. Revised editions, 1958. Each \$2.50.

Professor Charles C. Fries is world-famous as the creator of the English Language Institute at Ann Arbor, Michigan, of which he is now the Consultant, Dr Robert Lado being the Director. *English Sentence Patterns* and *English Pattern Practices* are two of the products of the controlled co-operative experiments that have been carried out at the Institute since it was started in 1941. These two publications, with *English Pronunciation* and *Lessons in Vocabulary*, make up the Institute's Intensive Course in English—an immense and invaluable contribution to English language teaching.

*English Sentence Patterns* forms the basis of the Ann Arbor Intensive Course and is itself an application of the principles and methods of analysis explained in Fries's *The Structure of American English*. It presents sentence patterns in a series of graded lessons, on the assumption that language learning consists not in learning about the language but in developing a new set of habits—habits which must first be formed orally. While studying this book for review, I have simultaneously been classifying mistakes made in written compositions by students from many countries from Indo-China to Peru. The great majority of the very numerous mistakes I found in the compositions were precisely those which could have been avoided if the writers had acquired the new set of habits that *English Sentence Patterns* was designed to establish. For example, in the compositions I found the error 'Never I drink coffee'. In Lesson Two of this book I find 'You/NEVER/drink coffee' given as the model for a drill. I could give scores of similar examples.

That does not mean, however, that if only students could perform all the exercises in the 324 pages of this book they would have a faultless command of English or a real feeling for the language. This book is so important and is likely to have such an influence that it is necessary to warn teachers against allowing it to disturb their sense of proportion. There are many factors in learning a language, and ultimate mastery may depend on keeping all of these factors in balance. Users of this book should also note that it was compiled with a comparison with Spanish constantly in mind. This explains why in Lesson One the student is told to use a part of BE, not HAVE, in such expressions as 'John is right', the Spanish equivalent being literally translated as 'John has right'. On the other hand, the book opens with the example 'THE LESSON IS INTERESTING',



in which the pattern is exactly the same as in Spanish but of which the very first word would give trouble to speakers of Slavonic or Oriental languages. No one would be more emphatic on this point than the authors themselves, who have done so much to convince us that language-teaching materials must be adapted to the structure of the pupil's mother-tongue. As it happens, it would not be difficult to adapt *English Sentence Patterns* for pupils speaking languages other than Spanish. Much of it is potentially (if not actually, in its present form) as useful for Indo-China as it is for Peru, and many of the mistakes I found from Indo-China had their counterpart in preventive drills in the *Patterns*.

Of the wealth of matter in the *Patterns*, only a few samples can be given here. I was particularly struck by the examples showing CAN, MAY, MIGHT, MUST, SHOULD at work (p. 96) in contexts that were much clearer than any so-called rules could be; by the examples of the 'separated pattern' ('He CALLED her UP', 'He LOOKED it UP in the dictionary') contrasted with the 'no-separated pattern' ('They CALLED FOR him', 'He LOOKED OUT FOR them'); by the sensible and sound advice on how to use certain tenses, and by the prudent avoidance of statements pretending to explain how the tenses operate; by the useful exercises on 'IF clauses'; and by the variety of exercises on combining two simple patterns to form a more complex one. Stubborn opponents of pattern practice would find in this book any number of ideas for their own teaching, if they cared to consult it.

Yet the *Patterns* are open to (and deserve) critical discussion. Rival schools of American linguistics would, I understand, criticize them in linguistic terms quite incomprehensible to ordinary teachers of English. It is as one of the latter that I am now writing. I notice that what I have always called a 'noun' is called in the *Patterns* a 'Class 1 word'; a 'verb', a 'Class 2 word'; an 'adjective' a 'Class 3 word'. I know that Professor Fries would deny that a 'Class 1 word' and a 'noun' are identical, and I think I follow his argument—though from the examples in the *Patterns* some readers might wonder where the distinction lies. However, I accepted 'Class 1 word', &c., as part of the game—until I came to 'BE + the -ED/-EN form of a Class 2 word' and did what most teachers of English would do: I unconsciously translated this into traditional terms and realized it stood for 'the Passive'. Now, to me 'BE + the -ED/-EN form of a Class 2 word' is an analysis of a superficial aspect of the matter—an aspect of the *form* rather than the *function*. The term 'passive', if we remember its etymology (and why shouldn't we?), goes more to the heart of the matter and reminds us of why we use this 'pattern' at all. Indeed, the authors' preoccupation with the form rather than the function may be responsible for the poor examples of the passive found in the *Pattern Practices*—e.g. 'Meat is being eaten by him now'. There is a fundamental weakness here. Preoccupation with structure and with mechanical processes may distract our attention from such elementary yet vital factors as what we say and want to say in real life. In what circumstances, for instance, would native speakers of English say 'The feet are here' or 'She was a pleased woman'? In reply, the authors might well point to this very significant passage from the Preface to *Pattern Practices*: '... the highest purpose of PATTERN PRACTICE: TO REDUCE TO HABIT WHAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO HABIT IN THE NEW LANGUAGE, so that the mind and the personality may be freed to dwell ... on the meaning of the communication rather than the mechanics of the grammar.'

In those words, Dr Lado has said something of the greatest importance. The capital letters in that quotation are his: I would like to put the *second half* of that quotation in capital letters instead, if only because *that* is the point teachers are more likely to forget.

The *Pattern Practices* (338 pages and 15 charts) consist of exercises, again oral, based on the *Sentence Patterns*; and again, here is a wealth of material produced by team-work and tested by classroom experience. By the use of the charts, the *Practices* provide a maximum of structural exercise on a minimum of vocabulary and give much-needed advice on how visual aids can be fully exploited for language teaching.

**ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION.** W. Friederich (translated from the German by R. A. Martin). 80 pages. *Longmans*. 1958. 4s. 3d.

Until British English has a simplified and orderly system of spelling, a book which formulates and clarifies a large number of present orthographical usages is welcome.

Unlike earlier works of this title, the present book does not describe the sounds and their formation, but sets out the principles on which unitary and compound words are stressed, and states rules for the derivation of sounds from the multifarious combinations of the letters. Word-stress, the basis of sentence-stress, and strong and weak forms are summarized. Of particular interest are the lists of endings which attract or repel the stress.

As for the purpose of the book, the author states that 'pronunciation cannot be learnt by committing to memory the rules in this book' but that 'rules for pronunciation can . . . throw light on what has been learnt in practice and strengthen this knowledge through the associations it provides' (Preface, p. ix). This is a just claim: the book is then largely for reference in order to consolidate habits of deriving the pronunciation from the spelling.

The complex texture of English spelling is unravelled and many useful groupings of words stated. For example, the formulation of a broad fundamental rule that (in contrast to the usual formulation) in stressed syllables the vowel followed by a single consonant is short, may well be a helpful starting-point, although the exceptions are numerous. In fact, albeit this review of our orthography is of considerable complexity, it is, by and large, sound and clear.

Complexity is bound to be a drawback of any study of the English orthographical 'system', and the question which is rule and which exception must from time to time arise, as, for example, in 27(a), page 39, with the 'so-called ask-words'. And this would doubtless occur more often if more proper nouns and foreign loan words were considered.

One may query some details of the statements made and examples given but, in fact, such suggestions are invited by the author for the improvement of the book. Surely the relative is not regularly stressed as stated in 19(g), page 29: the words *conjure* ('kandʒə), *relish* ('relɪʃ), and *offer* ('ɔfə) are also exceptions to 7(a)(1). There are more alternative pronunciations than are given in the book, e.g., for *Rhodesia*. The index could in detail be improved: of eleven values of *ea* given in the introduction, two are not indexed. Some inconsistencies are virtually unavoidable in a work of this kind, e.g. *-all* is pronounced (ɔ:l) at the end of a word—43(d) page 51: and the word *shall* (ʃæl) is not given as an exception. However, such inconsistencies are reduced to a minimum by the care exercised here.

In fine, this publication is likely to prove helpful to any intermediate or advanced student of British English who has particular difficulties of pronunciation due to the vagaries of English spelling, and to anyone wishing to make a special study of aspects of English orthography. For the latter purpose, this survey is complementary to that made by Walter Ripman and William Archer for the Simplified Spelling Society.

# Report of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate on the English Language Paper

(Certificate of Proficiency Examination in English, December, 1957)

[We hope that this report, published last August and now reprinted by kind permission of the Syndicate, will interest many teachers of English. The examination paper follows the report.]

## *Preliminary Note*

As answers to this paper were submitted by over 1,100 candidates at centres in Great Britain and 1,600 candidates at 80 centres in 40 other countries (representing between them some 20 different mother-tongues), it is extremely difficult to give an overall picture of the quality of the work. Even the most general remarks need to be qualified by such words as 'in the experience of some examiners' or 'at some centres and not at others'. It can also happen that at large centres an examiner may find plenty of instances of a particular form of weakness, though many scripts will be free from it because the candidates will have had different teaching under various conditions. Some will have had longer time for preparation than others, and the amount of time devoted daily to the study of English is an unknown variable factor of great importance.

## *General*

The Panel of examiners consider that the question paper was of the same standard as those set for recent years. The essay subjects were well adapted to the candidates' interests and the passage for summary was perhaps one which it was easier than usual to visualize and from which to abstract the argument. An easier vocabulary test (Part I, Question 3) was offset by a more difficult Question 2. It was felt that the answers to Part I were better than the essay writing.

The December 1957 question paper is reproduced at the end of the Appendix to this report.

## PART I

*Question 1 Summary.* There was a general feeling that the passage was not found difficult and that its understanding was well within the capacity of the candidates. Some examiners reported that at many centres the exercise was well handled and that a number of the candidates constructed well written new paragraphs which contained most of the points of the original. Others reported that while there was evidence that the candidates knew how to do a summary and showed little tendency to introduce extraneous material or to make irrelevant comment (faults which often do occur in this exercise) yet there was failure to reflect adequately the points made in the original, that there was a good deal of carelessness and inaccuracy in syntax, and that answers were written as a string of sentences which were not linked together by appropriate conjunctions so as to make the answer really coherent in thought and language. Most of the examiners found evidence in at least some of their centres of good training and preparation for summary writing and of careful thought in its treatment.

The word-limit was generally well observed, but there are still a fair number of candidates who lose marks by writing greatly in excess of the number of words allowed. Examples of summary answers are given in the Appendix to this report. *Question 2 Writing of a paragraph based on some aspect of the passage.* Every examiner reported the answers as less good than the answers to Question 1. It was the exception to find, even in the work of good candidates, a well written paragraph that developed the comparison asked for in the question. Some candidates evidently considered that it demanded much the same information as the summary, and they were hesitant to give it all over again. Only a few candidates saw the point of the comparison.

*Question 3 Vocabulary.* The vocabulary test was not found difficult and this reinforces the view that understanding of the passage was well within the capacity of the candidates. The question was generally well answered and high marks were scored.

It may be noted that fewer candidates than usual wasted their time on this occasion by writing out the whole of Questions 2 and 3 in front of their answers.

## PART II—THE ESSAY

No examiner reported that the essays were in any way distinguished. The best that was said was that some were quite good, with the subjects competently treated. The general feeling seemed to be that there were very few well planned essays showing good control of English idiom, that many were too short and patchy, and others, discursive and rambling. It may be remarked that the very short essays are usually among those which have the greatest number of errors in grammar and syntax.

Some examiners came to the conclusion that large numbers of candidates who entered for this examination had had insufficient preparation and had, therefore, little hope of success. Insufficient time given to preparation would, indeed, seem to account for the baffling inconsistency sometimes found between the wide vocabulary which had been acquired and the way in which the words were strung together so as to produce little meaning in the whole effort. It would also account for the rare instances when a candidate made no attempt at an essay. It may be that many candidates entered without a clear idea of the standard required.

### *Detailed comments on weaknesses.*

(a) Lack of paragraphing and poor punctuation were contributory factors to poor results, and there was the usual crop of mis-spellings. There were also many cases of the confusion of words of similar appearance. Excessive use of colloquial and slang expressions was also in evidence at some centres.

(b) Special weaknesses over and above the poor powers of expression and poor command of English idiom which are noted by the examiners include the following:

(i) Poor sentence construction. This sometimes showed itself in candidates making little attempt at anything but the most simply constructed sentences. Sometimes sentences were left without a main clause, or the verb was omitted even in simple sentences. Weakness of sentence construction not infrequently arose from faulty punctuation. Most examiners found numerous instances of very long sentences built up with an elaborate architecture of commas, semi-colons and colons which were hardly needed by the simple ideas contained in the sentences. Sometimes a dash followed by a capital letter was used as the equivalent of a full stop. Too often subordinate clauses did not really come from some aspect of the main clause but were asides or quite separate ideas.



(ii) Inconsistent use of tenses, especially the indiscriminate mixing of past and present throughout a piece. The un-English use of the present continuous ('I am living in a village'; 'My wife is saying ill of my mother'; 'I am born in this town', etc.) was also noticeable.

(iii) Auxiliary verbs. Misuse of such words as could, would, should, might, continues to be a great stumbling-block.

(iv) Gerund and infinitive. The use of the infinitive instead of the verbal noun is wide-spread, especially in phrases expressing possibility: 'This gave the possibility to secure longer journeys.' 'The possibility not to suffer.' 'They do not mind to spend a lot of money.' 'Girls dream to become famous.' 'To prevent enemies to get across the river.'

(v) Poor word order. Particular difficulty was found when an adverb or an adverbial phrase came near a compound tense: 'I have seen often'; 'I often have seen'. 'Not well chosen broadcasts can have a bad effect.' 'Is always rather in a gloomy mood.' 'There were only a few gallons left of petrol.' 'A different aspect have the bridges of Oxford and Cambridge.' 'Everything depends only upon his skill and dexterity.' 'It is well known the tragedy of the earthquake that destroyed this town.'

(vi) Concord. There must have been a very large total number of errors of various kinds, including straightforward cases where a singular noun was used with a plural verb and vice-versa: 'Drama are broadcast.' 'Young people has less thought.' 'There were a girl in my class.' 'This kind of conflicts.' 'Another sort of coaches.' 'The advantages was very great.'

A large number of errors on this occasion concerned words not easily seen or understood by a foreign student to be either singular or plural. One examiner cites as coming within his purview in this respect the following words: much, many, family, crown, most, people, the rest. 'News' was another awkward word widely treated as a plural. Other examples include baggages, luggages, informations, propagandas, equipments, advices (for advice), amounts ('There are amounts of mines'), jewelleries ('The trade of false jewelleries have made a great expansion'), 'large improvements and progresses', 'The constants travel he makes and for a certain periods of time'.

Wrong concord between pronouns and pronominal words was also quite common ('Big towns with its busy streets.' 'They keep on asking ourselves.' 'Other earthquakes famous for its power of destruction.') and difficulty in manipulating the word 'one' (often used with 'you', even with 'you' and 'they' in the same sentence) is noted.

(vii) The Articles. Both articles were wrongly used, wrongly inserted, and wrongly omitted. Errors are common in most countries and particularly in oriental centres, where one examiner talks of the 'quite unregulated sprinkling' of the articles in the essays. It is noted that 'a' is often used where the word 'one' is needed, and that 'the' is inserted where not required, especially with abstract nouns (The poetry, The nature, The world-government). A few other examples: 'What nuisance it will be to do this.' 'The most people suffered a terrible damage.' 'In sixteenth century.' 'Bridge was the only means to cross.' 'The history tells us.' 'Few minutes later.'

(viii) Prepositions. Correct usage continues to be one of the most intractable of problems. Mistakes are wide-spread and very common.

(c) Other errors, some of them quite common, include the following: wrong uses of participles and mistakes in formation (e.g. 'destructured'), difficulties over transitive and intransitive verbs, the intrusive use of 'it' ('to travel, it was an adventure') and its wrongful omission ('Is very nice to travel'), the use of 'when' for 'if' and of 'for' used for 'because of'. Vocabulary mistakes of 'apparition'

for appearance, 'done' for made, 'experiment' for experience, 'prospect' for prospectus, 'upholstery' for hold up, 'repair' for protect, 'provocate' for provoke, 'worthy' for valuable, 'riches' for rich people, were fairly common. One examiner reported fairly common use of nouns as adjectives and more than one noted 'misunderstanding of the meaning of an existing adjective by giving it a meaning derived from the sense of the verb', e.g. 'comprehensive' used to mean 'understanding'.

## APPENDIX

### PART II, ESSAY

The following short examples, *A* and *B*, which are taken from two scripts submitted at the December 1957 examination, illustrate respectively many of the faults and weaknesses noted in the Report, and the good standard of clarity and accuracy which is often achieved.

#### *Example A*

'I haven't never seen a mine in all my life . . . So I got very curious to get in. Of course it was a artificial one, but pretty well built. . . . The little wagon were doing a large noise, we even needed to shout, to keep on a chattering. As far as I know we stoped for three times. In each place we sow the workers in their blue uniform, very durty, doing something different from the other. My goodness, what a life! Spending the all day in this dark hole (lighted by electric lights) breathing the awful air in it. I think they should never see the day lights, unless on Sundays, when they supposed to have holiday.'

#### *Example B*

'But the point is: why does poetry appeal to everybody? There are people who cannot even write, but they can sing, and songs are poems. Why, in the history of Literature of all nations is poetry and not prose the first to appeal? . . . The answer, I guess, is that poetry expresses emotion and, in Man, feelings come before thoughts. Prose demands a more controlled mind, a mind that has already learned how to repress emotion, to judge, to think and to express a thought in an ordered way.'

### PART I, SUMMARY

The two following answers *C* and *D* to the summary question were well above the average:

#### *Example C*

Today we can hardly imagine how difficult travelling was in earlier times, because for us travelling is so easy. Usually people travelled on horseback, for only very wealthy people could afford private coaches. Then stage-coaches came into common use which enabled people to travel faster and longer, not too comfortable, yet sheltered. That was because they changed the horses regularly and so avoided the rests for men and horses. However, this travelling was dangerous, for roads and weather were often bad, highwaymen robbed the passengers and fire could be caused by friction when the coach went too fast.

*Example D*

It is difficult to realize now that towards 1580, only horses were used for travelling. Few people could afford private coaches.

Stage-coaches, which changed horses along the route, were introduced at the end of the sixteenth-century. They avoided the long delays to rest the horses, were drawn by four horses and were much more comfortable than horseback riding. Travellers could carry more luggage.

At first, journeys by stage-coach were dangerous. The traveller's safety depended on the skill of the coachman to handle the coach on bad roads. Highwaymen could easily overtake coaches, and escape was impossible since speed caused fire at the axles. Stage-coach travelling was quite adventuresome.

In example *C* a very fair new paragraph is achieved. One or two points of interest in the original are either omitted or made too obscurely to be understood without the original. Such points include the question of luggage (omitted) and the fact that the passengers could now go on when horses had to be rested (obscured). It is to be noted that at least one of these points, if not both, could have been clearly set out if the writer had used the full number of words allowed (110, but only 98 were used). A more usual error is to spoil the value of the exercise by using words in excess of the number given. One of the great merits of this answer is the good connection between the sentences and ideas which is gained by employing such words as 'usually', 'then', 'that was because', 'however'.

Example *D* covers the ground quite well (including the points omitted by *C*) but the answer is more wooden and less interesting, since it is arranged in so many short sentences (9 as against 5 in *C*) and therefore has not the 'flow' of a paragraph which *C* gets by writing fewer sentences and putting in valuable connective words.

The two answers *E* and *F* which follow are typical of much of the weak work which a summary question produces:

*Example E*

Today we hardly believe that horses were, in the past century, the only way of transport; and this just for the rich.

Afterwards the people could travel by stage-coaches, swifter then the first, and comfortable for the traveller's exigences: a team of four horses drew a coach.

These journeys were dangerous for the people, especially during misty days, or in wrickety roads.

Even in fine weather men on horseback could easily surpass a coach and steal money from their purses at the price of life.

And the coach-man could'nt repair to that harm.

*Example F*

Travelling is easy nowadays but untill 1580 the only transport was the horse. Coaches owners were few.

In the end of the sixteenth century the stage coach was available; its name explained the substitution of the horses at regular time and stops along the journey.

It became possible to travel longer avoiding the delay necessary to the traveller on horseback.

The coach was a sheltered place but the danger for the travellers was represented by the fog and the unsafe roads.

The coach might suffer an attack by brigants on horseback who asked the travellers for money menacing death.

The coachman ought to avoid the fire caused by the contack of the friction on the axles. Travelling was adventurous indeed.

The weak and often slightly erroneous presentation of the facts, and the very poor English style will be self-evident. Example *E* may suffer because words fewer than the number required have been used (though the style is so poor that this is hardly likely), *F* because the number of words is in excess. Both answers, especially *F*, suffer from the disjointed form of isolated sentences in which they are written instead of being written as paragraphs having the ideas linked together logically and with proper connections.

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#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE

December 1957

(Three hours)

**Both Parts of the Paper must be answered**

*You are advised to attempt Part I first, but not to devote more than one hour and a quarter to it. The paper carries 100 marks, of which 40 are allotted to Part I and 60 to Part II.*

#### PART I

Read the following passage carefully, and answer the three questions set on it:

In these days, when travelling is so easy, it is hard to realise that until about 1580 the only method of transport available to the ordinary traveller in Britain was the horse. It is true that private coaches appeared on the roads from about the beginning of Queen Elizabeth I's reign, but only a few, very wealthy, individuals could afford them.

Then, towards the end of the sixteenth century, a new form of public transport was introduced, called the stage-coach. This name was given to it because the horses that drew the coach, which were usually a team of four, were changed at regular intervals or stages along the route. By this means one could undertake longer journeys than were practicable on horseback, for the regular change of horses cut out the long delays that could not be avoided by the rider who had to rest his horse as well as himself. Moreover, even if the coach was not comfortable, it shielded the traveller from wind and rain and enabled him to take more of his belongings than a single horse could carry.

Several dangers attended a journey by stage-coach, especially in the early days of coaching. The travellers' lives were in the hands of the coachman, who—particularly in a fog—might easily drive his coach off an ill-constructed road into a bog or a snowdrift. Even on a fair road and in fine weather, the pace of the lumbering coach was so slow that it could be quickly overtaken by highwaymen on horseback, who all too often deprived the passengers of their purses on pain of their lives. The coachman did not dare to drive fast, even when confronted by the menace of these ruffians, because of the worse danger of the coach catching fire from the friction of the wheels on the axles. Travelling by stage-coach in those days was indeed an adventure.

Its great advantage, however, was that it speeded up long journeys. As the years went by, more and more time was saved: the rough, narrow roads were improved both in surface and in width; and by their side sprang up new inns,



where the travellers could rest and eat while the horses were being changed, or could stay over-night on long journeys. The coaches, too, were improved in every way and could soon travel so rapidly that they acquired the name of 'flying-machines'. One was advertised to 'fly' from London to Bath in the remarkable time of three days—a journey which could not be made in less than seven days of hard riding on horseback. 30

1. Make a summary of the first three paragraphs of the above passage ('In these days . . . was indeed an adventure') in not more than 110 words, taking care to give the main ideas in a connected sequence and to use your own words as far as possible. Failure to keep within the limit of 110 words will entail loss of marks.

2. Compare, in a paragraph of 40-50 words, the advantages and disadvantages of travelling by stage-coach or on horse-back in the early days of coaching.

3. Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases, having regard to the context:

practicable (l. 10); in the hands of (l. 17); lumbering (l. 20); on pain of their lives (l. 22); confronted by the menace (l. 23); sprang up (l. 28); acquired the name (l. 31).

## PART II

Write an English Essay on one of the following subjects:

1. Broadcasting.
2. Bridges.
3. Earthquakes.
4. Mines.
5. The commercial traveller.
6. World government.
7. The appeal of poetry.
8. 'All is not gold that glitters.'

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VOLUME XIII · NUMBER 4 · July-September 1959

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Single issues 1s. 6d.*

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Owing to circumstances beyond our control, publication of this number of *E.L.T.* has been delayed. We much regret any inconvenience that may have been caused to our readers.

# English in Russian Schools

H. A. CARTLEDGE

The educational system in Soviet Russia provides for a ten-year school course. The schools are all-age, mixed schools admitting pupils at the age of seven. There is no physical division between primary and secondary sections. Classes, with few exceptions, are all of 30 pupils and, at any rate officially, they are non-selective.

In each of these ten-year schools one modern foreign language is taught. At all but a very few special schools, which will be described later in this article, the foreign language is begun in the 5th grade (age 11-12), so that those pupils who remain at the school for the whole of the ten-year course will have learnt it for six years by the time they leave school.

The foreign languages most commonly taught are English, French and German. Of these, English is the most widely taught of all, and is being studied by about 45 per cent of all school pupils in Russia.

Pedagogical research is carried on by the Institute of Methods of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in Moscow. The task of the Institute is to investigate the problems particular to the learning of a given subject, to suggest the most efficient approach to these problems, and to prepare schemes of work, based on investigation by the Institute itself in collaboration with teachers. Specimen materials are drawn up and experimented with in a large number of schools. On the basis of these experiments, together with suggestions for improvement from the teachers who have co-operated in them, the materials are revised and finally embodied in a teachers' handbook or even in a textbook, which is finally presented to the Ministry of Education for approval and adoption in the schools.

The Institute is eclectic in its way of working. In preparing new materials or in recommending new techniques it is careful to take into account whatever is of value in the books or methods already in use. Its criterion is efficiency, never novelty for its own sake. A doctrinaire application of, for instance, the so-called 'Direct Method' would be inadmissible; and the Institute is far from having made up its mind as yet on the principles for vocabulary selection which it would be prepared to endorse. On the other hand, when it is convinced of the value of any particular technique, the adoption of that technique is strenuously recommended to teachers all over the U.S.S.R. A uniform system of teacher training and a standardized set of textbooks make sure that its recommendations are adopted.

One technique which it advocates most strongly is a strictly phonetic approach to the teaching of oral English, involving the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet and conscious training in the production of English sounds, from the very beginning. The textbook for grade 5 (first year of English) gives the phonetic transcription for every new sound introduced, and systematic phonetic drills are given throughout the books for the 6th and 7th grades (ages 12-14). Phonetic training is not confined to sounds in isolation. The effect of stress on preceding and following syllables, the occurrence of the weak forms, liaison, the 'up' and 'down' tones of the voice are all points which receive conscious attention, and sentences in the 5th and 6th grade textbooks are carefully marked to give guidance in them.

Another outcome of the Institute's activities is the plentiful use of visual materials in the schools. The materials themselves do not appear to be centrally produced in any great quantity; but the walls of English classrooms in the schools bear ample evidence of intelligent suggestions for posters and wall charts emanating from the Institute and carried out by the pupils themselves. Examples which remain in the memory are a chart codifying rules for some of the more difficult placings of adverbs, a useful and decorative poster giving forms of greetings in English, e.g. 'A Happy New Year' and 'Many Happy Returns', and a chart of the months and seasons with some beautiful coloured drawings of country scenes at different times of the year. Classroom newspapers and wall magazines, often profusely and competently illustrated, are to be seen in most schools.

The basis of the study of English is a careful comparison of its characteristics with those of Russian. It is on this basis that the Institute of Methods prepares its teaching materials. In the early stages preliminary explanations are given in Russian, to prepare pupils for the particular points of grammar or structure which they are about to study. Close attention has been devoted to the use and omission of the articles, which appear to be a linguist's nightmare for the Russians, since in their own language the work of the articles is performed by changes in word order. Tenses are another object of particular attention. Russian, it seems, has 'aspects' of the verb which do not correspond exactly to English tenses and verb forms, and are hard to define—so hard, in fact, that an argumentative gleam tends to come into the eye of any Russian linguist if he listens to another describing them to a foreigner. In the case of the tenses the Russians give no support at all to the tendency, common in other countries in recent years, to teach the Present Continuous as the first tense. However useful this tense may be for activity teaching in the early stages, its form is considered too difficult



for a Russian beginner to master. The Simple Present is therefore preferred, and learning of the Continuous Present is postponed until the second year (grade 6, age 12-13).

The Russians do not rely exclusively on practice in sentence patterns for the learning of aspects of English structure. After each step has been practised, the principles on which it works are summarized and given to the pupils to learn. In the early stages, as has already been said, these descriptive summaries are given in Russian, but in the higher classes pupils are expected to repeat them in English. One girl in a 10th-grade class was asked as an oral test to describe in English the characteristics of colloquial English. She answered with great readiness—'weak forms', 'certain disjunctive question phrases', 'omission of parts of a sentence', 'use of certain colloquial terms'. She might have added 'abbreviation of certain auxiliary verbs and of the negative particle', which is more exclusively a feature of colloquial spoken English than any of the four which she mentioned; but her reply showed how thoroughly the point had been dissected, and also that the methods in use rely on 'rules' or 'descriptions to reinforce examples.

Teachers of English, as of all other school subjects, come mainly from teachers' training colleges, university graduates being on the whole destined for research and university teaching. The training colleges serve a three-fold function. They give a grounding in all branches of pedagogical study, both theoretical and practical; they round off the higher education begun in the secondary schools; and they give training in the methods and techniques peculiar to the subjects which their students are to teach. In the training colleges prospective teachers are given a thorough grounding in the principles and methods which the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences recommends.

The thoroughness of this grounding is evident in the schools. The importance of keeping a whole class active has been well drilled into the teachers. It is an inspiring sight to see some of the junior classes, in which one child may be putting up a phonetic transcription on the blackboard, another working out a set of verb forms on a different part of the same board, and a third doing a vocabulary exercise orally at the teacher's elbow, while the rest of the class carry on little dialogues on a given pattern, such as:

'What is it?'

'It's a book.'

'What book do you see?'

'I see a red book.'

'Do you like my book?'

'Yes, I do.'

All this goes on in the most brisk and cheerful manner, with no confusion. It is like looking at the mechanism of a watch, with all sorts of separate pieces moving purposefully round, each with its own job to do and all contributing to the performance of a common task.

The reader may have his or her own reservations about the value of the dialogue just quoted, considered as English. Examples such as this and the 'characteristics of colloquial English', given earlier on, demonstrate a possible weakness in the centralized structure of the educational system, namely, that if anything goes wrong at the centre the error will be repeated right out to the perimeter. These are details, however. The strength of the system is manifested in the high level of achievement. The emphasis is on oral work, since there are no written examinations in foreign languages, and the standard of spoken English is impressive. At the same time efforts are made to encourage individual reading. One school in Leningrad has enough copies of works of fiction to be able to lend copies to all its pupils, and special lessons are set aside for studying them. A great encouragement to reading is the price of educational books, which in Russia cost very little, so that schoolchildren who wish to have their own copies of English stories have little difficulty in affording them.

These comments have so far been confined to the ordinary ten-year schools. There are, however, a number of schools in which work in a foreign language begins earlier and occupies a larger proportion of the curriculum. A typical school of this kind is the No. 1 Special School for English in Moscow. Pupils at this school spend their first year as in any other school, in order to settle down to school life. In the 2nd grade (age 8-9) they begin English. The school has 17 specialist teachers of English, and the pupils divide into small groups for their English lessons. Some of the classrooms have been divided by partitions to provide small rooms for language work, particularly with the higher forms.

Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5 (ages 8-12) have five English lessons a week. This is stepped up in the later grades to six, with an additional period for literature in grades 8, 9 and 10 (ages 14-18). (In the ordinary schools, grades 5-7 [ages 12-14] have four lessons a week, and grades 8-10 [ages 14-18] have three.) In grade 8 (age 14-15) geography is taught for two periods a week in English, and the time-table allows for four periods of history a week in English as well.

The reason for the sharp increase in lessons given in English at grade 8 is that the first public examinations are held at the end of the 7th year (age 14). The results of these examinations determine

the immediate future of the pupils. They may either leave school, transfer to a 'technicum' (vocational school), or go on to a higher course at their present school. Students in this last group are clearly destined for some sort of higher education, and the purpose of the increased language practice in the 8th grade is to enable them to use a foreign language as an instrument for acquiring knowledge accessible to them only through works published in it. For this purpose English is considered the most generally useful foreign language.

The Moscow school, the first of its kind, was officially established nine years ago, and has now passed beyond the experimental stage. There are 10 or 12 schools of this type for English in Russia, not all with so long a history. A new one began in Leningrad last September in entirely new premises. It has at present two classes of 30 pupils in each of the first six grades, and will build up year by year until the maximum complement of 600 pupils is reached. The classrooms are all ready and waiting for them.

These special schools mitigate the impression of overall uniformity left by a series of visits to the ordinary 10-year schools, where the same sort of lesson always seems to be going on in the same way at the same time. The special schools have textbooks of their own for beginners, and also for the top grades, since the standard course is completed in the middle forms. Increased fluency in the upper forms is marked, as might be expected, but equally noticeable are correctness of pronunciation and accuracy in such difficult points of English as the use of prepositions, particularly in 'verbal phrases'—'to get on with', 'to live up to', &c. Teaching, right from the beginning, is very much on Direct Method lines, and proves that the Russians realize that the need for other aids to language learning decreases as the amount of teaching time increases.

Work at the special schools includes dramatic performances and the singing of English songs. The 4th grade (age 10–11) at the Moscow school entertained parents and other visitors last January to a programme of sung nursery rhymes followed by scenes from 'Tom Sawyer'. The items were introduced by two little girls in enormous white pinafores who delivered their introductory speeches in English with the greatest composure.

What impressions are left by a visit to the Russian schools? On the debit side, the centralization of both methods and materials which has been described above is bound to produce a slightly unfavourable reaction in anyone brought up in a more individualistic tradition. The work of the special schools modifies this reaction; but they are few in number, the outside observer feels that they are still 'experimental', and in a system where control from the top is

absolute one cannot avoid feeling that the experiment could be discontinued at a moment's notice if for any reason this were considered desirable.

It may be partly for this reason that few of the abler pupils, even in the top classes of the special schools, want to become teachers. The great upsurge of technical progress in Russia, which has led to such triumphs as the 'sputniks' and the TU jet airliners, has not unnaturally captured the imagination of the present generation of school pupils. Science and technology, industry and commerce, have claimed most of the male population for many years, the teaching profession being largely in the hands of women; but neither girls nor boys will admit now to much interest in teaching as a career. Marion, in the top class at the Moscow special school, is a case in point. Attractive, intelligent, with such a command of English as to make conversation with her entirely easy and natural, she would undoubtedly make an inspiring and an efficient teacher of English. But Marion is not proposing to teach English. When she leaves school she is going to train as what she herself called a cinema operator (her only linguistic slip, and a pardonable one), but which proved to be a woman cameraman. (A vocabulary problem here, which stumped the English visitor who talked to her just as much as it had stumped Marion herself. Can we say 'camerawoman'?).

On the debit side, again, is a certain un-naturalness in some of the phrases used by teachers in the classroom. 'What is it?' (for 'What's this?'): 'Now children, please attention' (for 'Listen carefully, children'): 'Now I shall show it to you' (for 'Now I'll show you it'): 'Now we shall put questions. Please put me a question' (for 'Now we'll ask questions. Somebody ask me a question'). Contact with contemporary spoken English is one of the greatest needs of the Russian teachers.

The last point which calls for less than favourable comment is the ill-chosen content of many of the reading passages in the textbooks. All too few of the passages from British and American authors are later than the 19th century. They are no more representative of contemporary British or American life than of the contemporary English language. The 9th grade book (age 15-16) has extracts from Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, Thackeray, Mark Twain and Wilde. The 10th grade book (age 17) advances a little. It has extracts from Jack London, Hardy, J. K. Jerome, Wells and Galsworthy, along with passages from two more modern writers, neither of them of any reputation in the West; but all too many of the passages have no inner unity or shape which would justify their choice, nor even the merit of exemplifying some particular linguistic point. Worse still, some of them have clearly been chosen to give a



one-sided and unfavourable picture of life in the English-speaking countries.

Apart from these criticisms, the general impression is of hard work and team spirit, allied to great efficiency. The visitor cannot fail to be impressed by the keenness and enthusiasm of teachers and pupils alike. None of the tasks involved in language learning is dull for them, if it is useful. School No. 112 in Moscow, a ten-year school of the normal type, has a thriving English club under the direction, for once in a way, of a man teacher. The youngest member of the club, aged 8, in the 2nd grade (where English is not on the time-table) was found at 12.30 p.m., after the end of his school day, sitting in the English room and getting his first English lessons from a girl in the top class who herself was sacrificing some of her lunch hour to teach him. That is the kind of spirit which more than anything else accounts for the remarkably high standard of present-day English studies in Russia.

## Practice-Teaching in the Training of Language Teachers

MICHAEL WEST

Practice-teaching is, in all subjects, the teacher-trainer's greatest problem: it is not only the teacher-trainer's greatest problem but the trainee's. To him it is the most outstanding and memorable part of the course: here he is not part of a crowd listening to a lecture, nor represented to his teacher merely by written script: he is alone and in personal contact with members of the staff. Moreover this is the point in which the theoretical portions of the course are brought down into contact with reality. If they fail to fit reality the student's confidence in the course is shaken; whereas if he fails to fit practicable theory onto his own realities, the benefit of the course is wasted.

One is tempted to begin an article on this subject with some anecdotes of the more ludicrous incidents which have occurred in practice-teaching, for indeed this is a part of the course which is highly productive of such things. One remembers the student in training for work in village schools in England who came into the classroom accompanied by a big drum to illustrate a lesson on sound. He was indignant when asked whether he would really do

this in his village classroom. There was a 'Dramatic Method' of teaching history which was very successful in the Fielden Demonstration school in Manchester, but the student who attempted to transfer this system to a lesson on the Battle of Hastings in a large class in one of the tougher schools in that city produced a riot and a queue to the First Aid room. There was the asphyxiating demonstration-model of the eruption of Vesuvius made of plasticine; and the Indian woman teacher who disappeared in the course of a lesson on the melting point of various fats and other substances. The apparatus was a spirit lamp, a small pan and a thermometer: I leave to the reader the problem—Where was the teacher? These anecdotes merely illustrate what can happen in an ill-designed system of practice-teaching.

Let us investigate the individual problems:

(1) *Where should the practice-teaching take place?* (2) *How should it be supervised?* and (3) *How should the final result be measured?*

### *The Location of Practice-Teaching*

There are three possibilities: (1) the Model School attached to the training institution, (2) classes in other schools in the same place, and (3) elsewhere.

We suggest that the Model School is the one school in which there should never be any practice-teaching. It is supposed to be a model, and students may go into it and see what should be done, what can be done under the very best conditions, and the results which can so be obtained. The very fact that it is a model makes it unsuitable for practice-teaching since it is necessarily unrelated in many respects to the conditions in which the trainee actually works himself. His school is *not* a model; whereas if half-trained teachers are allowed to function in the Model School it ceases to be a model.

The second possibility is classes in local schools. The danger is that these classes may not be sufficiently related to those in which the trainee will actually have to work. Thus it is undesirable to give practice-teaching in the schools of a city to a teacher who will be employed in a rural area. A second difficulty which may arise in the case of a training institution situated in a not very large city is the problem of numbers. For a course containing fifty students one needs to have available some three or four thousand pupils if each class is not to be used by more than one student and if in every other year the practice classes are to be allowed to lie fallow. The over-practised class can be a nightmare to the trainee and a very unfair test of his abilities.

One may say perhaps that practice-teaching in the local schools

is a useful introduction to establish the main points of the methods which are being inculcated, assuming of course that the greatest care is taken not to recommend or to commend any procedures which would not be practicable in the trainee's actual home conditions: it is no use advising or allowing the use of apparatus which would not be available in the student's own school in his native country. Tape recorders, episcopes, magic lanterns, enormous slate blackboards covering one end of the room, copious distribution of coloured chalks, cutting up of magazines, construction of models, and so on, are all very possible in the liberally provided schools of Britain or metropolitan cities but far less so in penurious conditions elsewhere. All these things should be banned to those students who will not be able to enjoy such advantages when they return.

As the final course of practice-teaching on which the trainee will ultimately be judged we believe that training in teaching in alien conditions is not fully effective as practice nor fair as a final test.

### *Supervision*

It is not ordinarily possible nor desirable to have the supervision of practice-training done by the ordinary class-teacher himself. Though he may be an excellent teacher he has not been recently trained and perhaps does not know those points upon which the Teacher's College specially wishes to insist. It is however common to see him sitting in the class at the back during the practice-teaching. He may be doing this merely from interest so as to see what these new ideas are, or he may be there for the sake of discipline. His presence is, however, apt to be embarrassing to the trainee and preventive of any test of the trainee's discipline. A trainee may indeed get away with things which he would not ordinarily be able to do were the class teacher not present.

In some cases a Supervisor sits through the whole lesson of a trainee, though this is not very usual and certainly very undesirable, since it tends to make the teacher design a 'show-off' lesson in which the teacher is active all the time and the class does relatively little except look, listen and intermittently respond. Education is a system of learning helped by the teacher and large tracts of any well-conducted lesson, especially in languages, consist of work by the pupils under individual supervision and guidance: there is therefore nothing much for the Supervisor to see. The best system, we believe, is one in which the Supervisor looks in at three adjacent classes, spending a few minutes in each, or possibly a long time in one but very little in the others where the teacher is getting on nicely or the subject is one in which very little active instruction from the platform is required.

The very evil effect of all systems of practice-teaching and that which has most carefully to be guarded against is the show-off lesson: indeed teacher-training in the past has tended to do much harm in the schools by producing a type of classwork which is all teaching and little learning. The so-called Practical Exam has now fortunately disappeared and students are judged on the record of the observations of the Supervisors co-ordinated in intermittent consultations. Yet even so there is inevitably a tendency to show off. The ludicrous instances quoted above—the big drum, the Battle of Hastings, the plasticine model of Vesuvius, are all instances of show-off lessons intended rather to impress an onlooker than to promote a learning effect in the pupils.

### *The Record*

It may be useful to describe what proved to be a very satisfactory system. The Supervisor had a loose-leaf notebook. On each page there was a small photograph of the student: this was helpful in a short course where one had to acquire the students' names very quickly, or where one had to see a rather large number of students. It was helpful also in recalling students trained in past years: indeed this Record Book might contain personal notes besides the remarks on practice-teaching. Every visit to a student's class was recorded with its date and a note on the teacher's progress. Even when no note was necessary the date was entered so that one might know that the student had been observed sufficiently often. The loose-leaves of the various Supervisors were collected together at the end of the course and put into the student's file, so that one could see what the various Supervisors had thought of him. Together with this there was of course the final judgement after staff consultation.

In addition to the Supervisors' books there was the trainee's own book, that is, a small notebook which was placed on the table in the classroom while the teacher was teaching. On entering the room the Supervisor quickly snatched up this book and carried it with him to the back of the room where he made notes on it for the student's guidance. The student could therefore see what had been said of his work from the very beginning and by the various Supervisors. Moreover it was useful for a Supervisor to look back over other Supervisors' remarks.

There was no practical examination for all the students but there was a Practical Examiner to whom special cases were referred, that is, cases in which the supervising staff at the college differed very widely in opinion, and marginal cases of possible First Class and possible Failure. In these cases only a teacher might be called upon to give a lesson in front of the External Examiner.



*The Demonstration Lesson and the Criticism Lesson*

A Demonstration Lesson tends to be unreal because it has to be given with a relatively small class compared with the student's normal class. One can hardly give a demonstration with a class of forty or fifty or more pupils: the class must be sufficiently small for the observers to be able to get close and see what is going on. The same difficulty applies to the Criticism Lesson. It may, however, be partially overcome by a simple device. The effect of teaching a large class when there is actually not a large number of pupils can be obtained by having a big gap between the teacher and his platform and the front row of pupils. So also in practice-teaching where a teacher accustomed to dealing with large classes has to do his practice teaching with a split class or some small group, a large gap between teacher and front row of pupils tends to prevent the 'Fireside chat' style of teaching which is quite inapplicable to the teacher's normal conditions. It is, with the help of this device and a suitable Lesson Form, possible to teach a small class as if it were a big one; but it is not possible to teach a big class as if it were a small one, and it is a highly undesirable result of practice-teaching if the teacher's training tends to make him do so.

The Criticism Lesson tends to be very productive of show-off types of teaching. We believe that the only sure preventive of this is a set of fixed lesson-forms, laying down procedures which compel the teacher to treat language work as a learning process. A standard pattern of lesson is one in which (Step 1) the teacher introduces a task and deals with foreseeable difficulties and then (Step 2) sets the class to study and practise. Finally in Step 3 he tests. (1) Teacher sets task; (2) Class practises; (3) Teacher tests—this is the standard pattern, whether the lesson be speech or writing or reading or dictation. The attempt to fit a language lesson into the Herbartian lesson plan is obviously fantastic, whereas set lesson-forms described in detail in the lectures and followed in the student's plans of lessons are a useful guide and a saving of labour. Indeed the elaborate lesson notes customary in some training institutions may well be dispensed with. It is enough to state the material taught and the lesson-form to be followed.

*The Postponed Certificate*

We believe that all practice-teaching is inevitably somewhat unrealistic and it is most unrealistic of all in the case of the foreign student who is being trained in a country which is not his own, whether it be the French teacher doing practice-teaching with English children in England, the African teacher doing practice-

teaching in Wales, or the Mahratti student doing practice-teaching in Bengal. There can be preliminary practice as a part of the training course so as to get the idea of the lesson-forms and go through the motions; but the final practice-teaching and the final estimation of the candidate as a teacher should (we believe) be made in his own class, or at least in a similar one in his own country. On his return to his own country he may do a period of practice-teaching under the guidance of a qualified person who will give a final recommendation necessary before the absolute certificate is granted. Such a system would not be very practicable where the teacher is teaching in a free style without any set lesson-forms, but where there are set lesson-forms it is much easier for an independent Supervisor to judge his effectiveness in carrying out those forms. He knows (from the lesson-forms) what the teacher is supposed to be doing; his judgement is mainly one of businesslike procedure, class control, avoidance of lecturing and so on: he does not have to judge lesson-plan or technique: those are laid down.

### *Conclusion*

I have ventured these opinions on this most difficult of all subjects in the hope that others will disagree or perhaps in some cases confirm them. It would be useful to obtain the opinions of teacher-trainers in the various countries and indeed also of ex-trainees.

Practice-teaching is the part of the training course which affects the student-teacher more intimately and has the greatest effect upon his real efficiency in the classroom. It is the ultimate practical test of his training and indeed of the efficiency of the training institution itself. The institution may stand or fall upon the work in this one department. There is not only the effect upon the student to be considered: there is also the effect of realistically conducted practice-teaching upon the staff. The Supervisor of practice-teaching can often learn quite as much as the student in training—if the work is realistic: practice-teaching acts as a filter separating the practicable from the ideal.

# In the Classroom

## No. 6: Disciplined Activities in the English Classroom

A. V. P. ELLIOTT

What happens in *your* classroom when you ask your pupils to do a piece of written work? Is there an immediate uproar, desk lids banging, books dropped on the floor, cries of: 'Sir, I haven't got a pen!?' Or is there quiet, orderly activity, the pupils setting to work quickly and purposefully?

These things do not depend merely on the kind of discipline you impose on your class. They depend much more on the self-discipline your pupils can acquire if you help them to know what you expect of them in the various activities connected with English, and to carry out their work in a quiet and orderly fashion.

Trained order and self-discipline is not just a convenience for you, though it will, in the long run, save you a lot of time. The main purpose is to create in the classroom an atmosphere of alertness and activity in which good work can be done, to let the pupils know what you expect of them in different types of lesson, and to give them the opportunity to co-operate with you in the work you do together.

The purpose of this article is to give you examples of where you can help your pupils in this way, and of how such help may be given.

Many teachers appoint individual members of a class to carry out certain duties. One cleans the blackboard, another sees that the teacher's table is tidy, a third is timekeeper, a fourth gives out books. These small responsibilities are good, but the exercise of responsibility should be a matter for the whole class.

Here, then, are some of the activities where the class as a whole, and its individual members, should be trained to exercise responsibility for quiet and order and the work that you require of them:

- i. *Entering and leaving the classroom.* This is often a matter of extremes. Either the pupils march, like soldiers, into and out of the classroom (as required by school custom or the class teacher's rule), or else they enter and leave in a disorderly rabble. A little practice with a new class will ensure that they enter and leave walking, not marching or running, that they are quiet when they get into the room and go quickly to their desks, and quiet at the end of the lesson until they leave the room.

- ii. *The lesson begins.* When the teacher is ready to begin his lesson he should expect the attention of the whole class. The pupils should know this, and give their attention to the teacher as soon as he enters the room. They should also know what, if anything, they should have on their desks in front of them.
- iii. *Getting out books, &c.* The teacher may start by saying: 'Get out your Readers.' Getting things out of a desk can be done noisily, or quietly. Obviously this is another matter for practice in self-discipline. Or the books may be kept in a cupboard and given out by a member of the class. This involves giving the correct number of books to the first boy or girl in each row, who passes them along quickly and quietly.
- iv. *'Hands up!'* Most teachers ask their pupils to put their hands up when they know the answer to a question. It is also convenient to have them do this when, for example, someone needs help during written work or silent reading; when a pupil is lacking, for example, pen or ink; or when, for any reason, a pupil needs to attract the attention of the teacher. (This implies that the teacher is always ready to give his attention, and not reading the newspaper with his feet up on the table!)
- v. *Groups and pairs.* It is sometimes convenient for a class to divide into small groups of five or six pupils. One of the activities best performed in groups is oral drill, since it is one of the ways in which each pupil can get sufficient practice in speaking. Each group occupies one part of the classroom and the business of moving into these positions can be carried out quickly and quietly only after deliberate practice. For certain kinds of oral work (for example, question-and-answer exercises), it is useful to have the class work in pairs. This requires no actual movement, but each pupil must know who his partner is, and get to work with him as quickly as possible.
- vi. *Class moving to front desks.* When the teacher reads to his class, or tells them a story, or teaches them a new part of the language, it is well if the pupils sit as near to the teacher as possible. This may involve moving chairs to the front of the class, or, with old-fashioned furniture, the pupils crowding into the front desks, so that they may hear, and see, as easily as possible. (Many teachers prefer to keep pupils at their desk throughout every lesson. But occasional movement is stimulating for the pupil, and, provided such movement is carried out in an atmosphere of quiet and order, better work is likely to result.)
- vii. *Choral speaking and dramatic work.* Dramatic work, whether it is the acting of a simple story or of a scene from Shakespeare, is generally done in front of the class. Some teachers also train their



pupils in choral speaking, where a poem is read aloud, or recited, by a group or groups of pupils. These activities also require movement about the classroom to take up positions, and here again preliminary practice is the foundation for quiet and order.

viii. *Individual movement.* Individual pupils move about the classroom for certain purposes. They go, perhaps, to the teacher's table for individual correction of written work; they come to read aloud to the class; they go, while writing compositions, to consult dictionaries or other reference books.

ix. *Handing in written work or books.* This is the opposite process to that described in iii. The pupils pass their papers or books quietly to the end of the row, and the individual who is appointed for the purpose collects them from each row and brings them to the teacher.

There are three other matters which do not concern movement about the classroom, but which are essential to satisfactory performance in written work and in drills. These are:

x. *Reading over and checking written work.* Pupils should learn from the beginning to read over and check everything they write. This is one of the ways by which they can improve their own written English and spot mistakes before even the teacher sees their work.

xi. *Work when written work finished.* Inevitably some pupils will finish their written work before others, and when these have read over and done all they can to check what they have written, there comes a time when they will either sit and do nothing or, if they know beforehand what you expect of them, will get out a book or other work and occupy themselves until the rest have finished. (This is a time when a classroom library of English books, papers and magazines can be particularly useful.)

xii. *Oral and written drills.* When your class are about to start work on oral or written drills, it is important for pupils to know exactly what they are expected to do, so that a lot of questions and re-explanation may be avoided. This aim will be achieved partly by the attention which, it is hoped, your pupils are accustomed to giving you, partly by the quality of your own initial instructions, but also by the practice of giving an example of how each drill is to be worked. It is also worth while spending considerable time on instruction and example the first time you do a particular type of drill. Substitution tables, for example, and oral drills, which often involve movement into groups or forming pairs, will benefit from careful instruction so that in future they can be done with the minimum of explanation, questions or undue noise.

xiii. *Talking.* It is not the purpose of this article to suggest that pupils should always be as quiet as mice in the classroom. There is a time for silence, as when written work is being done, a time for

noise, as in certain kinds of choral speaking and dramatic work, and times for pupils to talk among themselves, as when they are preparing for group reading or dramatic work, or producing a class newspaper, or doing oral drills in groups or pairs. Left to itself, such talking will soon rise to a roar. The art of talking quietly must be learned and practised.

### *The teacher's part*

The above describes what I hope you will recognize as a very desirable state of affairs in the English classroom. Desirable, but impossible? Surely not, provided you establish the right kind of relationship with your class, for this is fundamental to everything that happens in the classroom. (For example, as you expect courtesy from your pupils, be courteous to them. Avoid shouting at the class or at individuals. Quiet but clear speech should ordinarily be the rule for the teacher. Give the class the sense that you mean business, and that you and they are working together.) There are also direct ways in which you can help your class to achieve these disciplined activities. First of all, be clear yourself, and make clear to the class, that the classroom is a work room (not a lecture room, and not a sounding board for you, your scholarship, or your vanity). It is a place where you and your pupils are going to get through a lot of work together, with the aim that they shall learn to handle the English language. Take the class into your confidence, and tell them that there are a number of activities which must be practised if the work of the year is to run smoothly. These are the activities described under headings i. to ix. above. Take, for example, the movement into groups described under heading v. Tell the class that it is convenient to do certain kinds of work in groups. Read out the names of members of each group, and tell each group in which part of the classroom it is to assemble. Then announce: 'Into groups—Go!' There will be instant pandemonium, talking, shouting, scraping of furniture on the floor, banging of desks, etc. Moreover, the movement will take place much too slowly. Some pupils will not remember which groups they are in. When the uproar has subsided, say: 'Go back to your places'; and when this movement has been slowly and noisily accomplished, say quietly: 'That was much too slow and much too noisy, wasn't it? Now let's try it again, and try to do it quickly, without any noise at all. Ready? Into groups—Go!' When you have practised this three times you will be surprised to find how quickly and how quietly it can be done.

The same kind of practice can be applied to the other movements and activities, until the pupils know well what you expect of them.

The matters described under headings x. to xiii. can be left until you come to them. Then it will be necessary to explain what you want, and to make quite certain that it is always carried out.

It was stated at the beginning of this article that this kind of trained order and self-discipline is not just a convenience for you, though it will, in the long run, save you a lot of time. The main purpose, I repeat, is to create in the classroom an atmosphere of alertness and activity in which good work can be done, to let the pupils know what you expect of them in different types of lesson, and to give them the opportunity to cooperate with you in the work you do together.

## Linguistics and the 'Practical' Teacher

W. R. LEE

The language-teacher who is disdainful of linguistics (or what he imagines to be such), doubting that it has anything to do with his daily problems—'Some of these theorists have never even *seen the inside* of a classroom!'—and, on the other hand, the linguist<sup>1</sup> who seems to look down on language-teaching as an inferior task (to be undertaken, if at all, for bread-and-butter reasons) are neither of them unfamiliar figures today. They appear to have little in common and are often, indeed, hardly aware of each other's activities, still less of a possible overlap of these. Between the language-teacher and the linguist lies, in general, a gulf of mutual indifference and neglect. If this is an over-simplified picture, which leaves out the shining exceptions, it is none the less roughly and deplorably true.

Ought the gulf between linguist and language-teacher to be bridged? How can the bridging best be done? How is it, as an exception, done already? Attempting to answer these questions, we shall first take a brief look at what language-teaching involves, and then go on to consider what light linguistics can shed on language-teaching and whether all language-teachers ought to concern themselves with it.

<sup>1</sup>Though some call it pompous, the term 'linguistician' may be better, since a 'linguist' may also be one skilled in the use of languages. For brevity's sake, however, the author has used 'linguist'.

## ii

It will now seem illogical to say that every language-teacher is necessarily a linguist. He may not, of course, be a very competent one. His grasp of linguistic analysis may be feeble. Yet the decisions he is called upon to take, from the very fact that he teaches a language, are founded upon beliefs—good, bad and indifferent—about the nature of the language he is teaching. This applies especially to teachers who draw up syllabuses or design complete courses of instruction, but those who do not are involved in some such decisions too.

Nowadays it is a platitude that we cannot teach the whole of a language at once. We all have to begin with *something*: certain words, phrases and sentence-patterns, and not other words, phrases and sentence-patterns. We decide also, whether reasonably or unreasonably, how to continue; and there is choice of the language-material to be taught at every stage of instruction and for every lesson and every part of a lesson. If the choices are inept, learners will find what they are given unassimilable and useless, and will quickly get bored. Further, if too much of the language is fed to them at a time, they will become glutted with it, and mental indigestion, accompanied by a distaste for further nourishment, will result. If the diet is too thin, on the other hand, growth will be negligible and a similar apathy is bound to develop.

A decision as to the *content* of teaching is unavoidable, and can be reached in more than one manner. The same is true of two other decisions, as to *sequence* and as to *method*: the sequence in which the parts of the content are best taught, and the methods of teaching each part which are likely to be most effective. The importance of basing these choices on sound principles is coming to be generally recognized, and the recognition is increasingly followed by the use of well-graded language-courses apt to the needs of various parts of the world and various sorts of learner, courses backed up by teachers' books giving appropriate advice, often in detail, on classroom procedure.

As far as the first two choices are concerned, any language-teachers working out a course of elementary instruction are faced with problems such as: Is it mainly words or mainly phrase-patterns and sentence-patterns which should be taught? Are we to teach the most frequently used words, or the most useful words? Most frequently used by whom? Most useful to whom? And what *are* these words? Are the most useful words the commonest, and vice versa? If we are not to teach these words, or not these words only, what words are we to teach? If the commonest or most useful structures and words are to be taught first, how can we know which



they are? And so on and so on. Similar questions present themselves at later stages too, and the answers to some of the questions depend, of course, on the social and scholastic setting and on the type of pupil: whether young or old, girls or boys or both sexes; and particularly on whether the language being learnt is in general use in the community.

Doubtless to many of us these problems are familiar, but they serve as a reminder of the sort of speculation and inquiry, and perhaps also of research, that underlie a well-conceived course of instruction. To solve them we must look into word-frequency counts, and the theory of such counts. We must examine structures and the theory of structures. Phrases and sentences, we have to realize, are built on a limited number of ground plans, and are commutable in parts and to some degree.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, words are classifiable by their ability to replace other words at certain positions in the structures.<sup>2</sup> We arrive thus at a new understanding of the term 'parts of speech', and of ways in which the structures can be modified and extended. We understand better, and it is necessary to understand well, what is meant by 'the same' and 'different' at the various levels of language-analysis—sound-level, word-level, sentence-level, and so on. The idea of pattern and variant is important: for instance, we need to be clear as to what differences between sounds, rhythms and intonations are significant, and in what way; for if we are not, we shall probably waste time fussing about fine shades of difference which matter little or do not matter in the way we think they do, and shall neglect other fine shades which are important. A thorough knowledge of the most significant contrasts in the language being taught helps a teacher to stick to the point and avoid irrelevance. Linguistics contributes by setting out knowledge of this kind in an orderly way.

### iii

Indeed, we are involved in the very subject-matter of descriptive linguistics.

'But wait a minute,' the reputedly practical teacher exclaims. Why should *I* go into these things? *I* don't want to get tangled

<sup>1</sup>For instance, in *When are you leaving?*, the structure of which is a common one, a very limited number of words can replace *When*: and some of the possible changes elsewhere (e.g. of *are* to *is*) are conditional on changes being made at another position in the structure (e.g. *you* to *he* or *she*): but this sentence is commutable to some degree at all four positions in it.

<sup>2</sup>For example, *when*, *why*, *who*, &c., might be taken as the same class of word because, in a sentence like *When are you leaving?*, they can replace each other and so effect a change in meaning of a certain type. But the behaviour of such words in other kinds of sentence-structure would have to be looked at too.

in a spider's web of theory. It isn't *my* job to choose words and structures, still less to understand the *whys* and *wherefores* of doing so. All the words and structures are served up to me in the textbook prescribed, which also lays down the order in which to teach them. Are you suggesting I can't teach properly without fretting over frequency lists or sorting out the dry bones of structures?"

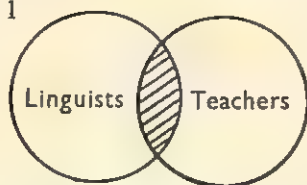
There is admittedly something, and perhaps almost a half-truth, in such a teacher's argument. Granted that a textbook course can be properly assessed only with the help of a linguist, a good textbook course and a good teacher unversed in linguistics can nevertheless together work wonders. Yet a high degree of awareness of what one is up to is surely to be desired, since without this it is harder to make appropriate modifications in the course—and few if any courses are in every way suited to the class facing one. This is not, however, the sole reply to the argument, nor the most essential one. 'You personally, perhaps,' the objector should be told, 'needn't go into all these matters, *though you would be better qualified to teach if you did*. But *somebody* must go into them. And if they are not gone into thoroughly, instead of a well-arranged and effective course there will be ragbags of bits and pieces of tuition which add up to very little—and that is what pupils quite often get.'

## iv

It is no more necessary, in other words, for every language-teacher to take up linguistics than it is for every linguist to take up language-teaching. What is essential is for some from each field of work to cultivate an interest in the other field: only in this way can the two be profitably associated. The links can never be material alone—books, curricula, syllabuses; for excellent examples of these can only have been written by teacher-linguists or linguist-teachers, or whatever we choose to call those whose knowledge is both of linguistics and of teaching. *People themselves are the links*. They exist already, of course, but are relatively few. The linguist and the language-teacher are usually different people, and the latter, while scornful of what seems the linguist's unpractical outlook, tends to connive at the assumption which some linguists make, that the language-teacher is concerned with less 'weighty' matters.

At this point might come another interruption. 'Yes,' says an intelligent reader, 'your remarks on the need for a close alliance between linguistics and teaching theory are sound, and of course the connection can only be a personal one. You want to see teachers and linguists overlap, like this—the shaded area standing for people who are interested in both things and who see how they interact.'

DIAGRAM 1



But this is quite unnecessary. All you need is a chain of communication between the two. Teaching and linguistics are remote from one another: it is middle-men who join them up. Closer to fact would

be this diagram—the middle-men being inspectors, textbook-writers, research-workers and so on'.

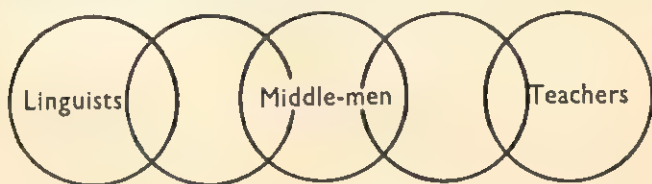
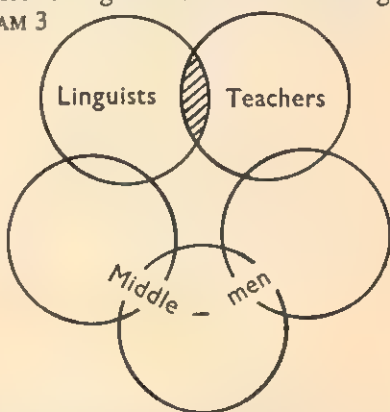


DIAGRAM 2

Once again, there is something in the rejoinder. To some extent ideas about language and ideas about the teaching of it influence each other from afar, over extended lines of communication which might be difficult to trace: but to some extent contact is close, as in Diagram 1. Many teachers have themselves, for instance, studied phonetics, which we may view as a branch of linguistics, and have done so in the light of classroom experience and needs: and conversely, many phoneticians have been interested in the applications of phonetics to language-teaching. At the same time phonetic theory may exercise an influence on ignorant teachers through the classbooks they use, or through syllabuses drawn up or advice given by those better informed than they are; while thought on phonetic problems continues to be influenced by teaching experience not necessarily the phonetician's own. Surely the position is better summarized by combining Diagrams 1 and 2, perhaps thus:

DIAGRAM 3



Here there is transmission over a distance, via middle-men, and there is also direct personal contact.

## V

Diagrams of this sort have an air of tidying up reality, and tend, of course, to look absurdly naïve. More so without doubt is the belief that two spheres of thought and activity can influence each other in but one way—and still more so the notion that classroom practice is self-sufficient without theory.

A point worth remembering about lines of communication and chains is that weakness goes with length. I remember a party game I played as a boy. The players sat in a line or a big circle, and the first player wrote down a short sentence and then whispered it to the second. The second whispered it to the third, the third to the fourth, and so on round the circle or down the line. The last player had to say out loud what he thought had been whispered to him by the last but one, and of course the final 'message' was often laughably unlike the original. The more players there were the more garbled it was: the longer the line the greater the loss in transmission. There is an obvious application: if linguistics has anything to offer, let the language-teacher take it as directly as possible; similarly, let the linguist take as directly as possible from teaching whatever knowledge, influencing linguistic theory, teaching can offer. One and the same person may, of course, be teacher and linguist, exemplifying the ideal overlap. May linguists with the time and inclination to teach languages, and language-teachers with the time and inclination to study linguistics, long flourish—may they also multiply, since they are far too few!

Teachers who take up linguistics, if they keep in mind the problems of their daily teaching, are the better equipped to cope with those problems, and should come to exercise greater influence, than teachers who do not take up linguistics: the former alone are qualified to set out clearly what it is that has to be taught, to decide upon priorities and arrange the succession of teaching steps, to make and improve syllabuses, to devise well-conceived lesson-material and pertinent exercises and tests, to choose and also if need be to compile textbooks which are appropriate. It is undesirable, nevertheless, to think of such teachers as a class apart, as (inevitably) a small élite heading an unenlightened and uninfluential mass of other teachers. The more teachers there are who understand what they are doing and who can sift and critically examine their material and methods the better, especially for the pupils. When we say, therefore, that not every language-teacher need take up linguistics, the emphasis is on 'need'. It is desirable. What matters more is that the course itself should be based on sound linguistics, and especially on a systematic description of the language concerned, even if teachers



using the course are unaware of what underlies it and of how it has been put together.

## vi

Linguistics sets out knowledge of the significant contrasts of a language in an orderly way. But what sorts of contrast? It is certain, also, that this is not all it does. It concerns itself not only with what can be set out vertically, in columns, thus:

Table 1. *Minimal Contrasts*

A	B	C	D
(of 'sound') <sup>1</sup>	(of letter)		(of word)
/ki:p/ <sup>2</sup>	reed	I	in
/kæp/	read	you	on
/kʌp/	Reed	he	near
/ku:p/	Read	she	under

but also with what can be set out horizontally, showing (to put it simply) what goes with what: for example, the sound /s/ with the sounds /p/, /t/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /w/, /pr/, /tr/, /kr/, &c. at word-beginnings, but not with /b/, /d/, /g/, /r/, /j/, &c.; *I* with *am*, *you* with *are*, *he* with *is*, &c.: a certain tense in a subordinate clause with a certain other tense in the main clause ('*We shall wait here until you return*'); one word-order in the body of a question and another in its tag or tail ('*It isn't yours, is it?*'); and so on. Linguistics deals, therefore, with structure and system.<sup>3</sup> But this is still not all. It deals with language as it is heard and seen in everyday life, with language in its social context, with the real-life (as distinct from the instructional) *occasions* on which this or that word, phrase, intonation, style, can be used. Learning the language is (up to a point) learning to live as speakers and writers of it do in a particular community. Linguistics is thus a guide to language usage at a number of different levels.

To return to the question of contrast. This is a question of minimal differences (between one utterance or piece of language and another) which native users of the language have learnt from

<sup>1</sup>Features of rhythm, intonation, loudness, &c., are also, of course, sound-features: the inverted commas indicate that 'sound' is here used in a narrow sense (to refer to vowel and consonant sounds).

<sup>2</sup>The phonetic transcription of English here employed is that of D. Jones's *English Pronouncing Dictionary*.

<sup>3</sup>The use of these two terms in this sense is now fairly widespread in Britain. Cf. J. R. Firth, 'A Synopsis of Linguistic Theory, 1930-55', espec. VII, in *Studies in Linguistic Analysis* (Philological Society, 1957).

experience are important in a certain way, what we may call an 'objective' way. Irrespective of the manner in which it is spoken, *It's a cup* can never mean *It's a cap*. Whether shouted or whispered, drawled or snapped, said cheerfully or with a sneer, and whether a boy or an old woman says it, *cap* refers to headgear and *cup* to a drinking vessel. A difference of sound (in the narrow sense) goes with the difference of meaning. We need to know exactly what differences of this kind there are in the language we have to teach: if we have such knowledge, we can better assess our task in this field and will know what we are aiming at and be able to work out the more effectively a means of reaching our goal. We shall have consciously grasped one of the *systems* of the language. Similarly, when it comes to writing, *cap* is distinguishable visually from *cup* by the difference between the letters *a* and *u*. We need to know the visual systems of the language (and here the conventions of stops and capitals are included) as well as the aural systems: although, of course, if home and foreign language both use the same alphabet there is no very great difficulty here. Whether we are concerned with speech or with writing, however, it is not simply a question of one kind of unit (the 'sounds', or the letters). Language-teachers must also be conscious of the grammatical system, and this is more complicated. Just as *It's a cup* differs from *It's a cap*, so *It's your cap* differs from *It's my cap*, the contrast between *my* and *your* being a detail from another system. No language is made up of one system alone: it is, as the linguist briefly puts it, polysystemic. At the level of syntax we can similarly work out and state systems of contrasting units: some dependent, for instance, on word-order (*This is your cup*, *Is this your cup*, &c.). None of these systems can be looked upon as entirely independent of the others. They interlock: for example, the grouping of words into 'parts of speech' is determined largely by how they can be used in various syntactic structures. But this is a complicated matter that need not detain us at the moment.

It might be said that the structures of a language are its systems viewed from another angle, or rather that the complex unity of a language can be viewed from two sides. We discover the systems, and the terms or units in each of these, by comparing almost identical utterances and noticing where they differ. Having established these units or terms, we can look at the language to see what always, or often, precedes or follows what: and then we discover what are its structures.

In considering the use of language in a context of everyday activities, we are looking at it as a fully meaningful whole in which its systems and structures are, as it were, bound together. Con-

siderations of context take us outside linguistics proper, which is concerned with the build of a language, that is to say, with its *internal* relationships. However, at all stages in the analysis of a language—analysis carried out with the aim of stating what its systems and structures are—we need to bear in mind the contexts of usage. We know that *cup* and *cap* are 'different', not because we can hear a difference of sound (the difference between the *l*-sounds in *feel* and *fall* is also perceptible) but because we know that we and others use the first group of sounds or letters for a drinking-vessel and the second for a kind of headgear. We know also the sense in which *he* and *she* are not 'the same' (although in this sense *is not* and *isn't* are) and our knowledge is based on language-using situations. Knowing, if we are native speakers of the language under analysis, what is 'different' and what 'the same' we seek to discover the means by which the differences are conveyed or 'signalled' to us. The language-signals make use of the variable properties of several 'media' (just as painting makes use of the variable properties of paint): sounds, pitch, rhythm, marks on paper, and so on.

The native speaker's use of language is the touchstone we have to keep by us, and this is true whether it is the systems or the structures of the language which we are finding and setting out: we do our work of analysis inside the language, but have to keep looking at it from outside, to see what sort of language it is and whether it is all the same sort and the sort we know. Of course, it may be said that as home speakers of the language we *use* the systems and structures of which it is made up and therefore, in a sense, we know them—why, then, need we become conscious of what they are? We and others, including those to whom it is not a home language, have learnt it without this consciousness.

This cannot be denied, yet the objection is largely irrelevant. By and large we are discussing teachers and not pupils. But pupils form a large class, about which it is hard to generalize. If awareness strengthens control of what is learnt, we should foster it. Why neglect to make use of adults' and older children's analytical powers? Our tennis would not be much good if, while we were playing, we thought about the movements of the racquet. Yet the tennis coach isolates and slows down such movements for would-be Wimbledon stars to practise. Some pupils can learn more quickly and surely by taking apart and examining what they are to learn, looking at it as if through a microscope, comparing it with something else, and then putting it together again. Generalizations and rules help some learners, for whom analysis is a key. It is doubtful whether they help young learners much, and in general the wish and the

ability to analyse develop as we grow up. On the other hand, young children possess remarkable powers of unreflecting imitation. Analysis is beyond them, and if they are forced to undertake it it becomes an obstacle; yet a foreign language gives them little difficulty if they hear plenty of it, if it is the vehicle or accompaniment of what is especially interesting (games, stories, playlets, &c.), and if it is not picked to pieces or made the subject of precept and rule. Young children can use the systems and structures of a foreign language, though blissfully unaware of their very existence. The art of teaching learners so young includes the art of not telling them what they are learning, and even of not letting them know they are learning at all. Older pupils too can learn without analysis, but with them appropriate analysis is a crutch: later, of course, they should throw it away, *must* throw it away if unselfconscious fluency is to be achieved. Even these older pupils do not need an exhaustive analysis, but rather a partial one, concerned with those parts of the language which offer most difficulty, and only as much analysis as will help them (i.e. particular pupils, speaking a particular home language) to secure the new language-habits they are struggling to make their own. How much awareness is helpful depends on age, ability, and a number of other factors.

Teaching, however, is another matter. A teacher needs to be aware. Of course, in the first place he must have a good practical command of the language. Knowing *about* the systems and structures of the language without being able to use them competently—that is to say, without being able to understand, speak, and write the language—is not much use. On the other hand, a practical knowledge of the language, even a native's, is not enough either, and if a teacher has nothing but this his teaching is likely to lack clear and definite aims and to be haphazard and wastefully inconsequent. He is teaching the language. Very well—what *is* the language? The more sharply and clearly conscious he is of its systems and structures the more sharply and clearly focused his language-teaching is likely to be. He will know what it is important to teach. As far as textbooks and syllabuses are concerned, he will not be altogether at their mercy, he will not have to 'take them lying down'. These things he can judge, and make and re-make to suit particular circumstances. He is better equipped also to judge the efforts of other teachers of the same language and to advise them effectively. He is like the tennis coach, able to slow both the correct and the incorrect movements down: he is like the engineer who can take the machine to pieces and re-assemble it. But, of course, the coach should be able to play and the engineer to drive the machine himself; and the teacher must be other things too—guide, nursemaid,



friend, leader—which have little to do with linguistics and therefore do not fall within the scope of this article. The linguistic side is only one side of language-teaching and other aspects are also important.

## vii

In most of its branches present-day linguistics is a pre-science rather than a science, but no more than physics or psychology can it develop without a framework of technical terms. We sometimes hear the complaint that writings on linguistics are difficult, and that even well-educated and highly intelligent people cannot understand them. But why should they expect to do so without special study of the subject? No sane person expects to understand any book on mathematics or engineering or chemistry or even (say) biology which he may happen to pick up. There are laymen's simply-written introductions to these subjects, but the layman recognizes that each is a separate discipline, claiming its devotees, and that advanced books are bound to take the lower stages of knowledge for granted. Yet because all of us speak and write, we tend to think that discussion of language is everybody's affair and should be generally comprehensible. Linguistics, like other branches of learning, demands an apprenticeship; it calls for steady application on the part of its students and offers knowledge which is accumulated gradually.<sup>1</sup> It is not everybody's cup of tea. Among those who might be expected to give it attention, however, are teachers seriously interested in the craft of language-teaching, at least some of whom may well make a careful study of linguistics in search of approaches relevant to their tasks, even if the acquired knowledge does not always directly and immediately bear on classroom problems. Moreover, teachers who will not themselves be linguists may profitably learn to identify language-teaching problems in terms which linguists can respect, and to co-operate with linguists in working out and testing solutions of these problems. In other words, research should be the business of teachers and linguists alike, and should keep in touch with the classroom. Linguists who are not teachers, on the other

<sup>1</sup>A beginning can be made with J. R. Firth's *Speech* (Benn, London, 1930) and *The Tongues of Men* (Watts, London, 1937)—both unfortunately out of print—E. Sturtevant's *An Introduction to Linguistic Science* (Oxford University Press, 1947), F. R. Palmer's *An Introduction to Modern Linguistics* (Macmillan 1936)—also out of print, L. Bloomfield's *Language* (Allen & Unwin, 1935), S. Potter's *Modern Linguistics* (Deutsch, London, 1957), C. F. Hockett's *A Course in Modern Linguistics* (Macmillan, New York, 1958), H. A. Gleason's *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics* (Holt, New York, 1955-6), A. A. Hill's *An Introduction to Linguistic Structures* (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1958), and J. R. Firth's *Papers in Linguistics* (Oxford University Press, 1957). This is more than a beginning, no doubt! Not all these books are of equal difficulty nor do all the authors take the same view of linguistics.

hand, need a good knowledge of classroom conditions and the capacity to enter into the teacher's work sympathetically. As far as English as a foreign language is concerned, fertile ground for research into problems of teaching it can be found at study-centres where training to teach it is carried on. There especially—but not only there—the linguist's and the teacher's approaches converge, and the light thrown by linguistics on daily tasks ought to be at its clearest.

## Correspondence

We are interested in our readers' ideas and views, and cordially invite correspondence, although no guarantee of publication can be given. If you write to us, please keep to the point and avoid long-windedness.

1. Professor P. Gurrey, author of *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, writes: Mr L. A. Hill's letter in Vol. XIII No. 3 (p. 113) raises a very important point: at what age is a foreign language most quickly learnt? There are enquiries from many countries about this, and wherever English is taught to children under nine, teachers and administrators sometimes anxiously ask: is it a sound policy to do so?

The reviewer of Menon and Patel's *The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language* and Mr L. A. Hill both refer to the comparison in rates of learning between infants and adults. Unfortunately this somewhat clouds the issue and obscures a clear view of the fact that young children can learn foreign languages easily. And by 'young children' I mean children from three to nine years, by 'easily' without grinding at grammar and without mechanical memorizing.

The best evidence can be gathered in Ghana, where for many years English has been taught from the first year of schooling. Thus children of five and six learn English for six, seven or eight periods a week, often before they can read and write with any proficiency. Within seven years these children are being taught all subjects in English. We have to note, too, that they are often taught by teachers who have not been specifically trained in what is known as Infant Method, so vastly different from the traditional classroom 'chalk and talk' and 'presentation, explanation, application'. Why, I have seen a class of forty little boys of seven and eight playing a language-game of guessing where an object was hidden, and using all the commoner 'place' prepositions quite correctly—no drill, no grammar. That was in Winneba, and the teaching was excellent.

Such evidence throws light on the question of the age at which a foreign language is learnt most quickly. Age is not the only factor; we must also consider method. A sound answer to the question would be, then: Between three and nine, provided the language is taught by the now more popular 'activity methods', by 'group methods' and by 'language games'.

2. J. D. BOWEN & L. McINTOSH write from the Philippine Center for Language Study: We question Mr P. G. Wingard's arguments in "What's This?" or "What is This?" on the value of teaching long forms. If it is advisable to postpone the presentation of difficult consonant clusters, this should be done by re-ordering the sequence of sentences to be taught. The first few lessons might well include sentences like 'Good morning' and 'How are you?'. The student would be learning utterances that would enable him to communicate, whereas 'What's this?' merely elicits new vocabulary items, and from people one already knows. And consonant clusters cannot be deferred very long.

The other arguments are straw men, as we will try to demonstrate. But first here are some of the disadvantages of postponing the contractions. If oral English is to be presented at all, it should have validity. This is itself a sufficient reason for teaching contractions; they are an integral part of the language. To omit them is to distort it. For example, the following sentences illustrate a useful contrast that would be lost without the contracted form: 'Oh Mother, let us go'; 'Oh Mother, let's go'. English speakers everywhere will recognize the meaning of the first sentence as 'Give us your permission' and of the second as 'Accompany us'.

Furthermore we seriously doubt whether a student is really helped by excluding contractions. Once we begin to 'simplify', there's no logical stopping-place. It would be almost as easy to justify postponing the contrast of /ði: ~ ðə/ because it's simpler not to have to choose. And then the /ə ~ æn/ contrast can also be postponed, since it parallels /ði: ~ ðə/ (except in writing, where the difference is maintained).

Students who learn contracted forms easily handle long forms when they need to. The transition is simple. But the student who has had only long forms is nonplussed when faced with contractions. This alone justifies teaching contractions first.

One other disadvantage of teaching only long forms abroad is the implied double standard; one brand of English for home consumption and another for export. In a world where unifying factors are important, let's avoid every tendency to pidginize the English taught abroad. Let's teach our students the real thing.

Mr Wingard says that although the method should be oral, the material should be common to oral and written language, and therefore long forms are to be preferred. It depends on what one reads. Contractions are certainly found in plays, novels, letters, and the like.

Then Mr Wingard says we should avoid unnecessary complexity at the beginning. We must, of course, determine which complexities are necessary and which are not. Alternations of /z/ and /s/ in contracted forms like *who's* and *what's* are cited, since there is no alternation in *what is* and *who is*. From the day he takes up English, the student must master this alternation in learning the regular plurals of nouns like *news* and *nurs* and possessive forms of nouns like *Sue's* and *Sut's*. What advantage can there be in trying to conceal the same pattern when it appears in contracted forms? Furthermore, the use of full and contracted forms is a meaningful contrast. 'No it isn't' and 'No it is not' are different. The second is much stronger, since there is contrastive stress on *not* rather than regular sentence stress on *is*.

A much sounder way of avoiding complexity is by proper spacing; that is, by establishing the best rate and order of presentation of the essential patterns of the language. The amount of material offered should not exceed the students' ability to master it, and the most useful patterns should be introduced early.

Mr Wingard claims that closely similar patterns introduced together delay

control. This is the weakest of his straw men, and if it is accepted, all drills of the minimal contrast type must go. *You're coming* and *your hat* are not closely similar anyway; *coming* and *hat* distinguish the constructions. And homonyms are very common in English. If the student is to be shielded from this fact, how can we handle 'I saw her yesterday' and 'I saw her hat', where not even the writing system helps us? And such 'closely similar' patterns as *he's* versus *his* are precisely the contrasts where the student needs discrimination practice.

Another 'closely similar' pair which Mr Wingard would avoid is *they're* and *their*. We hold that the student of English had better learn that these two are identical and that both are like *there*. Otherwise we are offering him a rubber crutch.

Mr Wingard says contractions can be postponed; other structural elements cannot. We think this can be done only at the risk of teaching distorted patterns, and that this risk is not worth taking. We believe that what is first learned is best assimilated, and that this is one instance where the principle of not learning something which must later be unlearned is particularly applicable.

We know that many of our students will one day themselves be teachers of English. Let's not spoil their chance to become models of spoken English by avoiding word-forms that occur in normal speech. We who are interested in the international value of English should be the last to train models whose distortions will hasten the day when interpreters will have to sit at a conference table of English speakers.

## Question Box

Conducted by F. T. WOOD and P. A. D. MACCARTHY

We shall do our best to deal with the ever-increasing number of questions which our readers send in, but we cannot promise to answer them all.

QUESTION. Could you please explain for me the phrase 'dust up their laurels' in the following quotation? '... Mlles Sayers, Spain and the rest had better dust up their laurels; here is a new challenger.'

ANSWER. *Dust up their laurels* is a variant of the more usual phrase 'look to their laurels', i.e. make an effort to maintain their reputation, renown or pre-eminence in the face of a formidable challenge.

QUESTION. Could you explain to me the difference between *come* and *go* used to denote change of state? What determines which of these verbs we use in a particular case? Jespersen says that *go* is used for things which are bad or which we do not desire, and *come* for the opposite. Thus milk *goes* sour, apples *go* rotten and a person *goes* mad, whereas clothes *come* clean and silver or brass, when polished, *comes* bright. Is there any truth in this distinction?

ANSWER. When employed to denote change of state, these two verbs are used in just the same way as when they express motion: *go* for movement from a given point, *come* for movement towards it. If we take our mental standpoint at the state before the change occurs, we use *go*, as we think of movement away from that to something else: but if we are primarily interested in the state that results (or that we hope will result) from the change, and fix our mind on that, then we



use *come*. Thus we say a person *goes* white, but dirty linen, when washed, *comes* white. A liquid *goes* clear if we think of its changing from a cloudy state to one of clearness, but *comes* clear if, desiring it to be clear, we view the change as a gradual approach towards that end.

The ideas of 'good' or 'bad' are deciding factors only to the extent that normally we desire what we consider good, and do not desire what we consider bad, and this determines the standpoint we take when such things are involved.

QUESTION. In Vol. XIII, No. 2, you dealt with *must* used as a past tense or with a past signification. I see that the C.O.D. says of it, 'as past tense, reporting reflection made at the time'. R. W. Zandvoort (*A Handbook of English Grammar*, 6th Edition) concurs with the C.O.D., but H. E. Palmer (*A Grammar of English Words*, 1955) has, 'In past tense, reporting a reflection made at the time of speaking'. Am I right in saying that this addition of the words 'of speaking' rather obscures the issue? The following passage, from Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Niggers*, seems to me a good illustration of *must* in a past-time context reporting a reflection made at the time *not* of speaking (or in this case of writing), but at the time of the past in question: 'My imagination waxed secretly to colossal force . . . I must—I must—I must commit a murder.'

ANSWER. Your observations seem, on the whole, correct, and as a statement of a general principle the definitions of the C.O.D. and of Zandvoort's *Handbook* are to be preferred to that of Palmer. But I think there are cases where *must* represents a reflection made at the time of speaking: e.g. when it expresses annoyance about something in the past, as 'My husband *must* invite someone to dinner just when I had arranged to go out for the day.'

When it is followed by a perfect infinitive it also represents a reflection, at the time of speaking, about a past occurrence or situation: for example, the following, from J. J. Bell's one-act play *Thread O' Scarlet*: 'I shouted to him to stop, but he paid no attention. I think he *must* have left the road soon after.' 'They found three cheques belonging to the farmer, but the bag of notes and cash they never found; he *must* have hidden it too safe.' But here, of course, although the reference of the entire combination is to the past, *must* itself is not used in a past sense; it represents the *present* assessment of what took place.

QUESTION. Chambers's *Twentieth Century Dictionary* defines the word *ton* as follows: 'a weight = 20 cwt. = 2240 lb. being a *long ton*': U.S., usually = 2000 lb. (short) or 2240 lb. (*long ton*). I have not seen the figure 2400 lb. for a long ton used elsewhere. Could you tell me when it is used?

ANSWER. For all ordinary purposes the term 'long ton' is not used. In Britain the recognized ton is that of 20 cwt., or 2240 lb., and it is always this that is understood when we order a ton of coal, or when the capacity of a vehicle is given as so-many tons. In earlier times, however, the ton varied in different parts of the country and in different trades, or for different commodities. For certain of these commodities the old 'long ton' of 2400 lb. is still used *within the trade*, though not, usually, in transactions between the trade and the general public. The O.E.D. quotes from a book of 1829, 'It (white gypsum) sells at ten shillings per long ton', and then adds the note, '120 lb. to the cwt.'. The term is often to be heard in the B.B.C. reports on world commodity prices: e.g. 'On the London metal exchange tin rose to so-much per long ton.'

QUESTION. I was very interested in your reply in Vol. XII, No. 3, p. 100, regarding the use of present and future tenses respectively in clauses beginning with *when*. It has been very helpful to me. But how would you explain the use of the future in the following two sentences? 'She will be well in a fortnight, when I shall go back to my little pupils at Queen's Crawley.' (*Vanity Fair*). 'Liddy wanted

to go to her grandfather's, to tell him about her holiday, and I said that she might stay with them till tomorrow when you'll be gone again.' (Hardy. *Far From the Madding Crowd*).

ANSWER. The explanation given in Vol. XII, to which you refer, was intended to apply only to *subordinate* clauses which are of the *restrictive* type. This, perhaps, should have been stated. The 'when' clauses in the two sentences you quote are not restrictive, and not really adverbial; they are continuative. In the first sentence *when* means 'and then'; in the second it adds a further fact about tomorrow. In this type of clause, when the reference is to the future the future tense is used: 'A meeting is to be held on Tuesday next, when the matter will be considered.'

QUESTION. Could you please tell me the real difference between *over* and *above*, and *under* and *below*?

ANSWER. *Above* means 'higher up than', *below* 'lower down than'; a pavement is raised *above* the street level, the basement of a house is *below* the street level. *Over* and *under* mean *directly* above or below, so that the two things are superimposed. Note the difference between 'He shot an arrow *above* the house' and 'He shot an arrow *over* the house', We say 'He wore a waistcoat *under* his jacket'. 'Below his jacket' would have quite a different meaning.

QUESTION. When I use the expression 'to see someone off' must I add 'to/from the station, harbour, airfield, &c.'?

ANSWER. If the destination or place of departure is clear from the earlier part of the sentence, or will be understood from the context or the situation, it is not repeated at the end. E.g. 'He leaves from Southampton on Saturday, and we are going to see him off.' A to B, whom he meets as he is coming away from the railway station: 'I have just been to see a friend off.' Otherwise it should be added.

QUESTION. I should like to know if English sometimes uses what your French grammars call the 'historic present' for vivid descriptions of events in past narrative. If so, I should appreciate a few quotations from your best writers, and from other sources too.

ANSWER. The historic present is sometimes used in English. It would obviously be impossible to print here a number of extracts from the 'best writers', but you will find examples in Chapters IV and VI of *David Copperfield*, and in Part II, Section iii, of Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Foxhunting Man*. Its more frequent use is perhaps by uneducated speakers, when they are giving an account of some past occurrence in which they were involved. Here are two examples (though it should be noticed that the English is ungrammatical). The first is from Lord Dunsany's one-act play *A Night at an Inn*: 'I did better than that. I walks up and down through Hull. I walks slow enough. And then I turns a corner and I runs. I never sees a corner but I turns it. But sometimes I let a corner pass, just to fool them. I twists about like a hare. Then I sits down and waits. No priests.' The second comes from *The Dear Departed*, by Stanley Houghton: 'He came in as merry as a sandboy. I says, "We're only waiting, Henry, to start dinner", "Dinner," he says, "I don't want no dinner; I'm going to bed".' Other examples of this kind will be found in the short stories of W. W. Jacobs.

QUESTION. Some grammars say that the *stressed* adverb of manner is placed before the verb, others put it after the verb. Which is correct?

ANSWER. There is no hard and fast rule; much depends on the structure or the pattern of the sentence as a whole. In a brief sentence like *He walked slowly* only one position is possible—after the verb; but if we add an adverbial phrase, then there are the two possibilities *He walked slowly across the room* or *He slowly walked across the room*. Of these, most people would, I think, feel that the former stressed the adverb more strongly. The practice, however, is not the same for all adverbs, and what is true for one verb is not for another. Thus we may say either *She carefully folded the letter* or *She folded the letter carefully* but we cannot say *He carefully* (or *carelessly*) *did his work*; here we must put the adverb at the end. Similarly we cannot say *He dishonestly gets his living* or *We attentively listened to what he had to say*, only *He gets his living dishonestly* and *We listened attentively*, &c. Moreover, even when front position is possible in a statement, questions and commands usually insist on post-position: *Fold that letter carefully*, *Did you fold it carefully?* The only deciding factor is usage. Since there are so many cases where the adverb must go after the verb, and others where it may go after as well as before, you are at least playing for safety if you make it follow the verb. Indeed, with front position it often ceases, strictly speaking, to be an adverb of manner and becomes a sentence adverb, as for instance in *He stupidly answered the question* (i.e. it was stupid of him to answer it) in contrast with *He answered the question stupidly*.

QUESTION. In *The Dog It Was That Died* by E. C. R. Lorac I find the sentences 'Nobody committed themselves to a definite answer' and 'Somebody's got to do it, haven't they?' (pp. 75 and 102 of the Crime Club Edition). In both sentences an indefinite pronoun (*nobody* and *somebody*) is used with a plural verb, though the words in themselves seem to suggest the singular. Is this correct, or is it just an example of slipshod writing?

ANSWER. It is not quite correct to say that these pronouns are used with a plural verb; *Somebody's* is short for *somebody is* (singular), and if the first sentence were in the present tense instead of the past it would read *Nobody commits themselves to a definite answer*, not *commit*. It would be truer to say that the personal pronoun used to refer to them is a plural one, and that if this in its turn is a subject, it naturally takes a plural verb.

Now as regards the explanation. It would, of course, be logical to expect a singular pronoun to refer to words like *nobody* and *somebody*, and in fact we could say 'Nobody committed *himself* to a definite answer' (though *themselves* is probably heard just as frequently), but, despite all logic, it would sound quite unidiomatic to say 'Somebody's got to do it, hasn't he?' or 'Nobody knew the answer, did he?' The fact is that with these indefinite pronouns what is said of each one of a group individually, without any particular one being specified, is thought of as applying to all, and so (in appended questions especially) the plural is used, since the singular (*he*) has a specific reference and would suggest a particular person.

QUESTION. In a German Schulansgabe of W. Browne's *The Holly and the Ivy* I find the following sentence: 'The whole play takes place in the living-room of a Georgian vicarage.' Is the expression 'takes place' correct?

ANSWER. The implication of the question presumably is that a play takes place on a stage or in a theatre, not in a vicarage, and logically, of course, this is true. But it is quite usual to say that a play takes place in a certain locality when really we mean that the events represented in the play are supposed to take place there, and it seems rather pedantic to object to this use of the expression.

QUESTION. Correct English, we are told, is the English that is spoken by educated Englishmen, but my experience is that in many cases three educated Englishmen



will give three different answers to the question 'Is this correct English or not?'. Moreover, the foreign teacher of English who is marking examination papers finds it difficult to get hold of an educated Englishman in the short time that is available to him, and to mark something wrong if there is a possibility of its being considered right might prejudice a candidate's chances of success or affect the grade at which he passes.

Again, we are told that English is a non-grammatical language. Does that mean that in many cases it simply cannot be decided whether a phrase is correct or not—that it is left to one's individual taste or whim? Reference books, I find, are not by any means unanimous; one will tolerate what another will condemn, while some mention possibilities of expressions which are omitted from others. I once read (I forget where) that only 0.3 per cent of English people speak correct English. Is this true?

Is there any norm of correct English available in books, and if so where can the teacher of English readily find it?

ANSWER. This is a question to which it is impossible to give a really satisfactory answer. Correct English is very difficult to define. The definition which you give is probably as good as any other that could be devised, but it does not really get us very far except in a negative sense—that it stamps as 'incorrect' anything which educated Englishmen (or most of them) would reject. But what exactly is meant by an 'educated person', English or otherwise? It may be argued that although we cannot give a precise definition of the term, we do, for all practical purposes, know the kind of person we have in mind when we use it in this connection. But, as you point out, such persons are not always agreed amongst themselves on what is 'correct' and what is not. Moreover, there may be regional differences. Many an educated speaker from the Midlands and parts of the North, for instance, will ask you what you think *to* a book, a play, a film, &c., though to a southerner, used to *of*, this would sound strange, while several well-spoken Northerners have told me that the southern 'What do you do *of* an evening (or, of a Saturday afternoon)?', which I habitually use myself, sounds to them definitely wrong; they would say *in* an evening and *on* a Saturday afternoon. Again, age may have an influence. Amongst the younger generation *will* in the first person of the future tense of verbs is now frequently to be heard; so is the expression 'aim to do a thing', though by most educated people much over fifty both would probably be considered incorrect.

In the face of all this what attitude is the foreign teacher (and examiner) to adopt? Perhaps, rejecting purely regional uses and variations, he should admit a construction as 'acceptable English' if it is used, and felt to be correct, by a fair proportion of what would be considered 'educated' English speakers and writers. As a teacher perhaps he should lean slightly in the direction of conservatism, as an examiner in the opposite direction.

To say that English is a non-grammatical language does not really seem to make much sense; whoever made the assertion probably meant that what is 'correct' is finally decided by what is actually said, not by what, according to some prescribed grammatical rule, ought to be said. But then, of course, the 'ungrammatical', once it becomes established and widely used, becomes grammatical. Thus *It's me* and *Who was the letter addressed to?* must both be regarded as grammatical English, despite any so-called rules that the verb *to be* is followed by a nominative as its complement and that in English prepositions govern the accusative case; but *Do you know of anyone will do some gardening for me?*, though sometimes heard, cannot be so regarded, since it would not be generally said by educated English speakers.

As for the assertion that only 0.3 per cent of English people speak correct



English, this is very difficult to prove or disprove. It certainly seems a small percentage, but so much depends on what we mean by, or are willing to accept as, 'correct' English. Perhaps very few people who might generally be considered 'correct' speakers are correct all the time and in every detail.

There is no one book which can be regarded as a final authority and court of appeal in these questions, but you might find the following helpful: W. Stannard Allen. *Living English Structure* (Longmans); J. Millington-Ward. *The Uses of Tenses in English* (Longmans), *Peculiarities in English* (the same author and publisher); and A. S. Hornby. *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* (Oxford University Press).

QUESTION. On p. 28 of Vol. XII, No. 1, of *E.L.T.* (Oct.-Dec., 1957), you give an explanation of the word *snob*. Some time ago I saw it stated in an essay on Snobbery, by Harold Nicolson, that towards the end of the nineteenth century those Oxford undergraduates who belonged to the nobility enjoined their fellow students who did not enjoy this privilege, when signing their names on the lists of attendances at lectures, to add *s. nob*, which stood for *sine nobilitate*. I have heard this explanation given in England, and in Oxford itself, and it certainly seems to me quite plausible. Is there any foundation for it?

ANSWER. The story may or may not be true, but even if it is it does not explain the origin of the word, which was in existence in the early nineteenth century. The Cambridge undergraduates' journal *The Snob* was flourishing when Thackeray went up to the university in 1829, though at this time, Professor Gordon N. Ray tells us in a note to his book *Thackeray. The Uses of Adversity*, the word signified 'a person not belonging to the University, and hence, by implication, low-born and vulgar.' It was Thackeray himself who changed its meaning.

QUESTION. In *E.L.T.*, Vol. XII, No. 1 (Oct.-Dec., 1957), p. 28, it is stated that *what*, when used as a subject, always takes a singular verb, even when a plural is expected in the answer; the same statement is later made about interrogative *who*, although here, for special reasons, an occasional plural is admitted. But surely you can say 'What are those funny objects over there?', 'What are those cakes made of?', 'Who are you, to give yourself such airs?', 'Who were those ladies in summer frocks?'

ANSWER. Your sentences are quite correct, but they do not invalidate the answer given in the previous issue of *E.L.T.* to which you refer, for in none of them is *what* or *who* the subject. In the first, the third and the fourth it is the complement of the verb (the subjects are *those funny objects*, *you* and *those ladies* respectively) while in the second it is the object of the preposition *of*, the subject being *those cakes* (*Those cakes are made of—what?*).

QUESTION. Why is the past perfect (*had seen*) used in the following sentence? 'I had seen them coming back last night; I saw them going afiel again; and there was the life of Bouchet in a nutshell.' (*The Inn of Bouchet*. R. L. Stevenson.)

ANSWER. Perhaps the question should be, 'Why is *last night*, and not *the previous night*, used?' *Had seen* and *saw* is the natural sequence of tenses. Stevenson is looking back from the time of writing to the time when he saw the events which he describes. One morning he saw them going afiel; the night before that he *had seen* them coming back (i.e. from their previous day's labours).

There is nothing peculiar or unusual about the grammar of this. What is unusual is the use of *last night* with the past perfect, for *last night* usually means the night before the time of speaking, and the events that took place last night are referred to by the simple past tense (*Last night I went to the theatre*). Here,

however, it means the night before the time (in the past) that the writer is picturing. The explanation is probably as follows: Stevenson looks at the sequence of events from the point of view of the time when he is writing, and therefore uses the sequence of tenses appropriate to that, but having already in his mind the picture of the peasants going to work, it becomes, for the moment, a 'present' to him, and so he slips into *last night* instead of *the previous night*.

QUESTION. Is it acceptable English to say 'to sign off the summit talks'? *To sign off* really means to announce the end of a radio broadcast.

ANSWER. The expression you mention is a piece of journalese, and should not be used in normal English. It may be an extension of the use of the term in broadcasting, but this itself is an extension of an older one, namely, to terminate an engagement (cf. 'to sign on for seven years'—enter into a contract to serve in the army for seven years).

QUESTION. What is the meaning of 'brinkmanship'?

ANSWER. It is a recently coined word (on the analogy of *marksmanship*, *horsemanship*, *seamanship*, &c.) meaning the art of conducting negotiations on political and international questions of a delicate nature, so that though the parties may get to the brink of an open rupture, or even of war, it is just avoided. The idea is obviously taken from a person walking along the brink of a cliff, but always taking care that he does not fall over. According to an article in *Notes and Queries*, Vol. 204, No. 5 (May 1959), the word was coined by Adlai Stevenson, and first appeared in print in a report of one of his speeches in the *New York Times* of February 26, 1956.

QUESTION. Journalists, I know, are always quick to make a verb out of a noun that has never been used verbally before. Recently I have come across the following examples. Do you think they are becoming established? 'Britain has cold-shouldered Nasser' (instead of 'given him the cold shoulder'), 'The talk deadlocked' (instead of 'reached a deadlock'), and 'to negative a proposal' (instead of 'to give a negative reply to').

ANSWER. *Cold-shoulder* has long been used as a verb, and is quite established. It is noted in Wyld's *Universal English Dictionary* (1932) *To deadlock* is very unusual and presumably quite modern—perhaps the coinage of an individual writer. It is not in general use. The verbal use of *negative*, again, is noted by Wyld as far back as 1932, though the alternative rendering you suggest does not quite suit the meaning. We may give a negative reply (say 'no') to a simple question, but we should not say that the question was negatived. When we say that a proposal (as distinct from an enquiry) was negatived we mean that it was considered and discussed, but finally a decision was taken against it.

QUESTION. In no dictionary can I find *trigger* used as a verb, yet from printed sources I have collected the following: 'In a curious way they triggered off a new debate on the awkward subject of Suez', 'Fainting is a reflex, triggered off by an empty heart'. Is this use general nowadays, and if so do you approve of it?

The same questions apply to the following uses of *orbit*: 'A new satellite is orbiting round the earth'; 'orbiting speed'.

ANSWER. The verbal use of *trigger* is fairly frequent nowadays, though it is not to be commended. It would not be found in writing with any pretensions to literary style. *Orbit*, as a verb, is quite new. It is unlikely to attain the currency of *trigger*, as, of course, its application, and the opportunities for using it, are very restricted. In any case it seems quite unnecessary, though 'orbiting speed' may be a recognized and necessary technical term.

QUESTION. Only in recent months have I heard the verb *to discount* used in contexts other than commercial (e.g. 'to discount the Russian moves as mere tactics', 'We should not discount the influence of Christianity in bringing about these great changes'). Is this use now recognized? Again, I have often heard journalists use *to precipitate* with the meaning 'cause suddenly to arise' (e.g. to precipitate a situation from which the Russians would gain; the invasion of Poland precipitated the second World War). Is this a correct use?

ANSWER. Both words have been used for a number of years in the senses in which you note, and not simply by journalists. Wyld gives the examples 'to precipitate a crisis' and 'to discount a great deal of what one hears'.

QUESTION. I have always regretted that there is no dictionary available which lists political words and phrases. I realize the difficulties that would be entailed in compiling such a work, but I believe it would be very useful; and would it be such a hopeless undertaking after all? I should like your opinion.

ANSWER. Presumably you mean *current* political words and phrases. The chief trouble about the compilation of such a work is that so much of the material it would have to include is ephemeral, so that by the time it was published much of its contents would be obsolete, while a number of new terms would have arisen which would not be included in it. Penguin Books do, however, publish *A Dictionary of Politics*, edited by Florence Elliott and Michael Summerskill, which includes the more permanent and established political and diplomatic terms, as well as information about politicians, statesmen and parties. You might find this of some use to you.

QUESTION. What is the meaning of the proverb 'It is a long lane without a turning'?

ANSWER. The usual form of the proverb is 'It's a long lane that has no turning', i.e. a lane that goes on and on without a turning must be a very long one indeed. The meaning is that circumstances cannot always remain the same; sooner or later a change must come. It is sometimes quoted as a consolation to those in misfortune.

QUESTION. 'For many months the average of deaths during these voyages was seventy-four in the thousand; the corpses were shot out into the waters: and who shall say that they were the most unfortunate?' (From the essay on Florence Nightingale, in Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*.) Why is *shall* used here?

ANSWER. This is an idiomatic use of *shall*, meaning 'who is qualified to, who will dare to, who will presume to?' &c. It is literary, not colloquial, and even in written English it is not very frequent. There is always something rather non-committal about it; the writer suggests that he thinks that perhaps they were not the most unfortunate, though he does not definitely say so.

QUESTION. Is the use of *should* correct in the following sentence, or ought it to be *would*? 'He went so far as to promise anyone a big sum of money who *should bring* him the head of the king.'

ANSWER. *Should* is quite correct. *Would bring* would mean 'was willing to bring', as in the sentence, 'He offered his watch as security to anyone who would lend him five pounds.' The idea that the writer wishes to convey is not that of willingness, but rather of chance or likelihood. Cf. 'There is some spare paper on the front desk, for anyone who should need it', and the opening line of Rupert Brooke's sonnet *The Soldier*: 'If I should die, think only this of me.'

QUESTION. 'He dares not leave the kitchen'. Is this right, or is it merely a misprint?

ANSWER. *Dares*, in this sentence, is not incorrect, but *dare* is more usual.

QUESTION. In *E.L.T.*, Vol. XII, No. 4, your reviewer of Leonhardi's *Dictionary of English Grammar* takes exception to the sentence 'She sat engaged in guessing what that letter meant', yet in Bertrand Russell's *Analysis of Mind* (sixth impression, p. 210), I find the following: 'You have been engaged for ages in giving increased precision to the meaning of words.' So far as I can see, the two sentences are exactly alike in structure. If that from Bertrand Russell is acceptable, why is the other not?

ANSWER. Admittedly the two sentences are exactly alike in structure to the extent that both contain *engaged* followed by *in* plus a gerund, but this does not mean that they are equally acceptable as English. With very little trouble we could compile quite a long list of sentences on the same *pattern* (e.g. *He stood engaged in looking in the shop window*) all of which would be open to the same objection as the first one you quote, namely, that they are unnatural English and would never be said. 'To be engaged in doing something' is idiomatic English; 'to sit engaged', or 'to stand engaged', is not. Moreover, while we can be engaged in some activity like doing a crossword puzzle, preparing a meal or washing a car, it scarcely seems the right word to apply to mental processes like thinking, guessing, wondering, &c.

QUESTION. In a book I have found the following sentence: 'During the 1890's the cathode-ray tube became the centre of a great deal of research.' I should like to know what the expression 'the 1890's' means.

ANSWER. It is quite a normal expression in English, and means the period between the year 1890 and 1899. In the same way we should speak of 'the 1920's', i.e. the years 1920-29. Perhaps it is the use of the apostrophe that has puzzled you, but this is the accepted way of denoting the plural of a number when it is written as a numeral and not spelt as a word: e.g. 'the 50's of the last century'.

QUESTION. Is it correct to say 'A long experience in commercial houses has made me well versed in business', or should one say 'much versed'?

ANSWER. The correct form is *well versed*; we should never say 'much versed'. *Versed* is an adjective, not a participle.

QUESTION. Is it correct to use the definite article in the following sentence: 'Owing to the drought and the rising prices of some raw materials it is very likely that in the next months . . .'? Would it also be correct to say 'in the following months'?

ANSWER. The definite article is correct, though as the sentence stands it has no very clear meaning, since the plural *months* may mean any number from two upwards. It would be better to say 'the next three months', 'the next six months' or 'the next few months'. *Following* can only be substituted for *next* if the reference is to past time: e.g. 'He took up his new post at the beginning of March. In the following few months he got to know the business thoroughly.'

QUESTION. In Nesfield's *Modern English Grammar* I find 'I am loving' given as an example of the continuous form of the present tense. Is it correct to use the continuous form with verbs such as *to love*, *to praise* and *to know*?

ANSWER. It is certainly an unfortunate example. Nesfield was rather strongly influenced by Latin grammar, and since in most Latin grammar books used in English schools the stock example of a first conjugation verb is *amo—amare*, this probably prompted him to use *to love* in his own work; but then in Latin, of course, the question of a continuous form does not arise, whereas it does in English. It is difficult to think of a situation where one could use the continuous form of *to love* or *to know*, though it would be possible with *to praise*.



Here are a few examples: 'I am praising his work in order to give him encouragement', 'He is always praising people who do not deserve it', 'Who am I to condemn his work when everyone else is praising it?'

QUESTION. I have great difficulty in using the verbs *may* and *can*. Which is the better of the two to use in the following sentences? 'My banker will be pleased to furnish you any further information you *may/can* require', 'You *may/can* be sure that any order you may entrust me with will be speedily attended to.'

ANSWER. To begin with, it should be pointed out in regard to your first sentence that 'furnish you any further information' is not idiomatic English (at least not as it is spoken in Great Britain). It should read 'furnish you *with* any further information'. In this sentence *may* is the correct verb to use, since it contemplates the possibility, though not the certainty, of further information being required. 'You can require' would mean 'you have the power, the ability or the authority to require'. The difference will perhaps be clear from such a sentence as the following: 'They may not require you to pay a deposit, though they can if they wish'. In your second sentence *can* would be acceptable colloquially, though *may* is more strictly correct. Here, of course, it is used in the permissive sense, just as it is in 'You may go if you have finished your work.'

**QUESTION.** The following comes from an article in the magazine *Life* entitled 'Two Crises for American Education'. 'There are now 1.066 million teachers in service in the public schools. An additional 750,000 are needed in the next three years.' How can you explain the use of the plural verb *are* (in the second sentence) when its subject has the singular article *an*?

ANSWER. We should, presumably, have to say that for the purpose of the article the number 750,000 is thought of as a single group, additional to those already in service, but from the point of view of the verb is thought of as denoting a number of individual teachers. In the same way *another* 750,000 and *a further* 750,000 would take a plural verb.

QUESTION. 'Fully a third were lost to other work before they could enter the classroom.' (i) Why is *a* third (singular) followed by a plural verb? (ii) *Fully a third* strikes a German as rather strange. So far as I know *fully* is the only adverb ending in *-ly* that has this position before the indefinite article. Fowler (M.E.U.) says that *full* is an idiomatic but colloquial variant of *fully*, but an Englishwoman has told me that 'a full third' is wrong.

Englishwoman has told me that 'a full third' is wrong. The singular article *a* ANSWER. (i) The fact that the word *third* is preceded by the singular article, has no bearing on the number of the verb. All expressions denoting fractions, no matter whether the numerator is one or more than one, take a singular verb if they refer to quantity or amount, a plural if they refer to number: e.g. *two thirds of the land was uncultivated*, *two thirds of the apples were bad*; *a third of thirds of the land was uncultivated*, *two thirds of the members are over sixty years of age*. (ii) *Fully*, in such a sentence as this, is quite normal English, and no English-speaking person would feel that there was anything strange about it. It is doubtful whether 'a full third' would ever be used by anyone who spoke Standard English, and even if it were it would not mean the same as *fully a third*. 'A full third' would mean a third, where less might have been expected; 'fully a third' means 'certainly a third, and possibly rather more'. *Fully* is by no means the only adverb ending in *-ly* that can be used to modify a noun preceded by an indefinite article: All the following can be used in just the same way as *fully* is used in the sentence you quote: *exactly*, *precisely*, *nearly*, *scarcely*, *barely*, *hardly*, *roughly*, *approximately* and (less frequently) *merely*.

QUESTION. In the following sentences is the singular verb the only idiomatic form, or could the plural also be used? 'Only £12,000 was spent', 'Three weeks is a long time'.

ANSWER. The singular verb must be used, as the figures denote a single sum of money and a single span of time respectively. You might note the difference between 'Ten shillings *was* missing from the till' (the total value of the sum of money) and 'Ten shillings *were* missing from the till' (ten separate shillings).

QUESTION. 'In England alone twenty million pounds a year is saved in the form of insurance policies.' This is my translation of a German sentence. An American friend tells me that the singular *is* is quite correct, but that the plural *are* could also be used. What is your opinion?

ANSWER. The singular verb is the more usual, but the plural would not be incorrect. When we use the singular we think of the entire sum as one amount; when we use the plural we think of the individual pounds, one after another, being saved as the sum mounts up.

QUESTION. The following is my translation of a passage from Nietzsche: '... the slow emergence of an essentially supra-national and nomadic kind of man which possesses a maximum of skill and power.' I used the relative pronoun *which*, since the corresponding word in the original German version referred to *kind*, but an American lecturer told me that in English the only possible word was *who*. Later on, however, I found in an English text-book the following: 'Many foreigners, as well as many Englishmen, admire the type of citizen *which* results from a public school education.' This sentence seems to me to be exactly parallel with the other; why, then, must I use *who* in the first sentence if *which* can be used here?

ANSWER. This is a very difficult question to answer, as it depends very much upon feeling in the individual case. It is certainly true that *who* is the only possible word in the first sentence; and it is equally true that it would be quite impossible in the second. This would suggest that though the grammatical construction of the two sentences appears to be the same, they are not, to use your own words, 'exactly parallel'. When a person is in question a *kind of* or a *sort of* is always followed by *who*, because a kind (or a sort) of person is, after all, a person having certain specified characteristics. But when we speak of a *type of* person we may be thinking of one of two things: (i) not a person, but a 'pattern' or 'stereotype' of the qualities commonly associated with all the individuals in a particular group (in this case *which* is used); (ii) people who possess those typical qualities (in this case *who* is used). Which of the two we have in mind in a particular sentence would seem to depend upon the idea that is expressed in the relative clause—is it one that is applicable to the type or to the person? The result of a public school education is not a citizen but a type or a 'mould' in which the citizens in question are cast; hence here we must use *which*. But we should, I think, say 'Many Englishmen admire the type of person *who* administers our Civil Service' (not *which* administers), for it is individual persons that administer, not just some generalization or accretion of common qualities called a 'type'.

QUESTION. In the last number of *E.L.T.* (Vol. XIII, No. 2, p. 83), I find an example of the use of the *-ing* form of the verb where I should have thought it quite impossible: '... and soon the normal child is distinguishing *free* and *three*.' How is this continuous form to be explained?

ANSWER. The continuous form of the verb is quite correct in this sentence. It thinks of the act of distinguishing the two words as something that is done repeatedly, whenever the child meets with them; it is therefore noticed, and

represented, as a continuous manifestation of a stage in its linguistic development. In the same way we might say 'He is speaking much more fluently than he used to do' (meaning whenever he speaks, though he might not be speaking at all at the moment), or 'Let a person get away with small acts of dishonesty, and soon he is committing greater ones'.

QUESTION. Could you please explain for me the difference of meaning between the following sentences? 'I remember you to come early', 'I remember you coming early' and 'I remember your coming early'?

ANSWER. The first sentence ('I remember you to come early') is impossible to explain, as it has no meaning. Such a construction does not exist in English. *Remember* is never followed by an infinitive with a subject to it. We may say 'Remember to come early' or 'I cannot remember to post that letter', but then the subject of *remember* is also the implied subject of the infinitive. In other words, we may remember to do something ourselves, or we may tell another person to remember to do it, but we cannot remember him to do it. For the meaning you presumably intend to express, if you wish to avoid the gerund you must recast the sentence to read, 'I remember that you came early'.

Of the other two sentences, only the third ('I remember your coming early') is really correct. 'I remember you coming early' is sometimes heard, and means just the same as the one with *your*, but it is better avoided, especially in writing. It is mainly with nouns that the genitive inflexion is omitted, probably from considerations of euphony: e.g. 'I don't approve of children having too much pocket-money', 'Do you remember my mother taking us to the pantomime?', 'I remember that house being built'. To discuss all the factors involved would take much more space than is available here, but for the immediate purpose of your question it is perhaps sufficient to say that where a personal pronoun is concerned it is always best to use the genitive.

QUESTION. One of my students wrote: 'Through the Middle Ages, till the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution began, the production of all goods *was* in the hands of artisans. They were organized in guilds. . . . They were labourers, capitalists and merchants, all in one. . . .' This goes on for about one page, and then he continues: 'With the invention of the steam engine by James Watt the Industrial Revolution began.' The past tense is quite clear here, but one of my colleagues insists that *was* in the first sentence should be *had been*, whereas I am of the opinion that *was* is correct here too. Can you help me?

ANSWER. *Was* is quite correct, since the period up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and all that happened in it, is viewed from the standpoint of the present time, and is therefore past. In the same way we might get in an obituary notice, 'From 1934 to the outbreak of war he *was* ambassador to . . .'. On the other hand it might read, 'On the outbreak of war he became head of foreign broadcasting; before that he *had been* ambassador to . . .'.

It all turns upon the question, to what does the writer relate the period as ambassador? To the time of writing (i.e. the present), in which case he naturally uses *was*; or to some point of time in the past (the outbreak of war), in which case he uses *had been*? Your student is clearly looking at the situation from his own point of view (the present), and so he is justified in using *was*. But he would have been equally correct if he had written something like the following: 'At the beginning of the nineteenth century, as a result of the invention of the steam engine by James Watt, the Industrial Revolution began. Until then the production of all goods *had been* in the hands of artisans, &c.' Then he would have been relating it to a point of time in the past, viz., the beginning of the nineteenth century, and not to the year 1959 in which he was writing the essay.



## Book Reviews

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE. J. O. Gauntlett. 124 pages. Macmillan. 1957. 3s.

The preface of this book outlines its history: first-hand study of the problems of language-teaching in Japanese schools, followed by lectures in a Japanese Linguistic Institute, which led to the publication of *Basic Principles of English Language Teaching* (1952), and now a revision of that book 'with the kind help of Dr Noonan.' Reference to this history is made here because it has given to the final revision a special value for those who are 'teaching English to students whose mother tongue is not cognate with English', though the book has a usefulness and interest for all teachers of foreign languages.

A remarkable amount of ground has been covered: Aims, Principles and Methods, Psychology, Phonetics and Tonetics, Vocabulary, Structure and Idiom, Reading, Games and Game-like Activities, Organizational Problems—so the chapter headings inform us; but very many other topics are touched on, explained and assessed; for instance, grading and simplified texts, semantic units, words to be taught in contexts and situations, syntactical question and answer, completion exercises—most of these are economically described and many are illuminated.

Indeed, conciseness is one of the best qualities of this book. We are given just the essential facts, explanations, judgments; and these are expressed so simply that obscure problems and complex processes in language learning are often clarified. An enquirer seeking to understand all that language-teaching involved and looking for an outline of modern thought on the subject could hardly do better than read through this book—and read it through twice or three times before going on to other books covering much the same ground.

This conciseness is so exceptional that reference to an example is called for: the survey of methods and principles in chapter two deals succinctly with The Grammar-Translation Method, The Natural Method, The Psychological Method, The Reform or Phonetic Method, The Direct Method ('There is no such thing as the Direct Method'!), The Oral Method, The Reading Method, The Eclectic Method—and all within fifteen pages. The effect of this is that great clarity is achieved, and an enlightening focus on essentials. To many experienced teachers this chapter may seem elementary; but those whose habits of mind impel them to make an unbiased and fresh study of the elements of the subject they wish to master may be assured that there is special profit in turning the limelight on the essentials—if one can disentangle them.

There is so much of value in the book—its soundness, its practical use, its certainty—that it is with regret that a reviewer must in all honesty draw attention to a lack of polish in the expression here and there throughout the book—in the hope that later editions will tighten up the language. For instance, it would be better to omit the 'only' in 'according to modern linguistics the spoken form is only the primary form of a language' (page 4); the logic of the following needs adjustment: 'the teaching of the culture of a people whose language one is learning does not contribute to a greater knowledge of their cultural background' (page 8); and similarly in 'If oral work is included, proficiency in this area means its contribution to a programme in which reading is the sole aim' (page 11). Is there a word missing in 'oral work does not only enrich one's ability to read but essential to the preservation of such ability' (page 11)? Then what can a young teacher make of: 'a modern curriculum should be very rich



in learning experiences' (page 52)? But there is no need to quote further.

Even with these faults of expression the book can be recommended to all teachers of English. It is especially useful in providing a clear idea of all the main issues, developments, and current problems in foreign-language teaching.

### THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH THROUGH LITERATURE.

Professor W. H. Gardner. 198 pp. National Council for Social Research, Department of Education, Arts and Science, Pretoria. 1958. 10s.

This is a report on a study tour of schools and universities in England, France and Germany by the Professor of English in the University of the Orange Free State in the Union of South Africa. Coming from a bi-lingual country, the author was interested in the teaching of English both as a first and as a second language, and his aim was to see whether syllabuses and methods in Europe offered suggestions for education in his own country.

The author regards English not only as a skill for use in practical communication but chiefly, at the advanced stage, 'as a medium of civilized values'. 'The aim of English teaching is not only to enable the young to express themselves but also to give them "selves" which are worth expressing. To this end the great writers are the true teachers of English.' English is a means of personal development for those to whom it is a second, as well as those to whom it is a first, language. While Afrikaans is necessary for all who live in the South African community, 'English is most nearly the universal language of balanced constitutional democracy; of scientific, industrial and commercial development; of humane culture in the broadly Christian-humanistic tradition.' In many parts of the world these functions in general education would more appropriately belong to the first language than to English; but there are places where European civilization, with English as its medium, can contribute to education something not to be found through the first language, at least for a minority. Only in such circumstances will Professor Gardner's conception of English seem relevant, for he is really concerned with the value of a full appreciation of English literature and how that is to be achieved: the word 'through' in his title is misleading, and its omission would express more accurately the end in view. However, an adequate response to any great literature is certainly of great benefit, and Professor Gardner's fair and detailed accounts of courses and teaching methods in those European countries will be of interest to all engaged in literary education.

Professor Gardner regards the language work in the secondary school as part of the preparation for the study of literature in the Sixth Form and does not discuss the English Language examination at Ordinary Level in the General Certificate of Education. For the Literature examination he prefers the English prescriptions of a Shakespeare play and one or two works of prose and verse to the wider reading expected in South Africa and praises the English tendency to make candidates think about the books rather than merely relate parts of the plot or describe characters. At the Advanced and Scholarship level he particularly praises the setting of unseen passages for interpretation and criticism. In the teaching of English as a foreign language in France and Germany he approves of the attention given to British life and institutions and the high standard of spoken English. While admiring the *explication de texte*, he thinks it should be supplemented by a written examination, apparently one similar to the interpretation exercise required of English students at the same stage.

At the university level, after a review of methods of teaching and syllabuses in a variety of English, French and German universities, the author concludes that some broad courses in the history of the language, together with a study

of Old and Middle English literature, 'is still necessary as the basis for a scholarly and truly critical study of modern English Literature', but on no account must this 'crowd out the study of the best of the most recent "modern" English literature'. The history of literature must be covered, but intensive study of some works, teaching students to read critically, is essential too. 'The problem is to strike the balance between (a) close, intensive literary study and acquiring critical technique, and (b) acquiring that wide knowledge which is necessary to a sound and balanced critical outlook.'

As regards methods of teaching, the formal lecture has its uses but must be supplemented by small tutorial groups in which the students can read together and discuss texts under guidance. The methods of 'practical criticism' should be applied to both prescribed and unseen texts. Exercises of this kind should be included in examinations, as well as the traditional types of question to be answered in essay form. Oral training on the French or German model would be a valuable addition to the tests applied in England.

Professor Gardner's insistence on active participation by the students themselves emphasizes an important principle in all language learning. So does his requirement that they should be capable of detailed elucidation of actual texts as a result of their training. Although his suggestions will have to be adapted to suit conditions different from those for which they are intended, his full and interesting account of the experience of European teachers should be stimulating to teachers of English anywhere. On reflection the reader will find implicit in it the main principles of any effective language learning, especially at an advanced stage.

**ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION.** English Language Institute Staff, Robert Lado, Director, Charles C. Fries, Consultant. 204 pp. Ann Arbor, *The University of Michigan Press*. 1954.

This work comprises exercises in Sound Segments, Intonation, and Rhythm which are part of the 1953 revision of 'An Intensive Course in English for Latin-American Students'. Approximately twelve years of experience with a particular scheme of English teaching has here produced a system admirable for suitability to its special purpose in content, grading, and clarity of presentation.

The teaching context is the preparation of students—native speakers of Spanish and Portuguese—with little or no command of English, for study and research in American centres of learning, for example, graduate and medical schools. Thus, able students are required in a limited time to learn the language, and the criterion of their success is the ability to understand and to be understood. Therefore passive and active exercises are both here effectively presented.

The theoretical basis of the materials was mainly the work of Professor K. L. Pike and consists of a descriptive analysis of the American-English sound system compared with that of Spanish and of Portuguese. The transcription used is phonemic and comprises thirty-nine symbols: the pronunciation is represented with excellent clarity.

The study of intonation relevant to this teaching context is discussed at length by Professor Pike in his 'Intonation of American English' and here, as a result, limited intonation contours are marked, and rhythm and intonation are practised together in graduated exercises. Special treatment of difficult consonant combinations and clusters is a feature of the text.

It is of interest that diagrams of sound formation have been found useful in the general work of the course: 'simple face diagrams' both for consonants and vowels occur at appropriate intervals. Thus there is a gradual acquisition of essential phonetic theory. It is unexpected to see the air passages closed in the

θ, ð, s, z, ʒ, and ʒ diagrams. Can this be pedagogic licence to encourage greater energy of articulation? If so, practice perhaps justifies it. The visual representation of staccato and smooth syllables in Sentence Rhythm on page 94 is a good detail of teaching technique. Throughout the course, contrast of difficult sounds, e.g. the front vowels, d and ð, s and θ, *can* and *can't* continues: exercises in speech techniques such as marking pauses and suppressing unnecessary accents are obviously truly aimed at achieving naturalness. The introduction clearly states purposes and with the index proposes appropriate methods. Genuine spoken language is presented for practice and confronts learners with those difficulties of understanding and speech which they will meet continually.

Though it is unlikely that extensive use of this particular course could be made in this country, it is, of its type, a model pronunciation course. Some might be disposed to feel that with exercises prepared in such detail, the teacher was in danger of being over-directed. However, this is a rapid course: all speech techniques must speedily be dealt with in orderly sequence and therefore the very detailed organization is amply justified: the individual teacher's linguistic and pedagogic skill will remain a major factor in success by bringing the language of the practice lists and sentences to life.

In this edition, specifically Portuguese aspects of pronunciation are not included.

**ON THE LINGUISTIC STUDY OF LANGUAGES.** W. S. Allen.  
30 pp. *Cambridge University Press*. 1957. 3s. 6d.

The Professor of Comparative Philology in Cambridge University points out in his inaugural lecture that the study of linguistics is often pursued under the title of 'comparative philology'. Yet 'the linguist, *qua* linguist, cannot be expected to share the philologist's enthusiasm for the discovery of ancient materials. His interest is in analysis rather than historical explanation, and there still remains a vast body of living material to engage his attention—material intact in all its fullness and complexity, as it proceeds from the mouths of its speakers and functions in its social context'.

Linguistics, says Professor Allen, is 'growing painfully out of the natural-history stage'. It tends to be distracted into non-linguistic channels by philosophy and communication engineering and by some linguists' denial of the relevance of meaning to linguistic analysis. He excludes from linguistics also the study of learning processes and the 'practical study of languages', though this (he admits) 'may do much to reduce the ethnocentrism with which, as native speakers of a language, we are inevitably burdened'.

What is left after these 'improper allegiances' have been abandoned? Professor Allen implies rather than states the answer. But if, as Jakobson and Halle say in *Fundamentals of Language*, linguistics is concerned with all aspects of a language, there is 'the risk of precluding any unified theory, *such as would justify its status as a subject*' (reviewer's italics). Reasonably practical considerations seem to have entered here.

Professor Allen makes no exaggerated claims for his subject. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that 'a linguist's *credo* must be a more or less personal composition, the recital of which is perhaps best suited to a personal occasion'. This is much too modest, and it is fortunate that Allen has not taken himself too literally. He is on firmer ground in concluding: 'The achievements of contemporary linguistics may not yet appear particularly impressive—but at least it is capable of defining its concepts and of stating the criteria upon which its results are based.'

The intelligent language-teacher, anxious to become fully aware of what he is about, will find this closely-written paper well worth study, but may ask



himself whether in the process of teaching a language to foreigners, especially over a long period and if by carefully worked-out steps, we do not observe the nature of that language the more closely, and whether a linguist's experience of teaching it would not influence his categories of description. Presumably W. S. Allen would sympathize with the idea.

**A BRIDGE TO ENGLISH**, an illustrated course for foreign students. A. F. Scott and Kathleen Box. Bk 1, 188 pp; Bk 2, 190 pp. *Max Parrish*. 1958. *Each book 7s. 6d.*

These books demand a considerable knowledge of English on the pupils' part, and are for use with a teacher, especially as far as the exercises are concerned. They each consist of thirty or so short and readable passages closely linked with a clear and attractive photograph. The subject-matter is topical and varied—In the Apple Orchard, The Pool of London, Windsor from the Air, Clearing a Pillar-Box, Driving Sheep, Helicopter Rescue, Derby Day, Bomb-Site Sculptor, Miners Underground, Stonehenge—and is suited to many of the interests alike of older children and of adults. The authors' claim that 'the essays introduce the student right away to naturally written English without any deliberate limitation or selection of vocabulary' is a fair one, but it is not entirely reasonable to say that the books form a 'course' or that they cover the requirements of the Cambridge Lower Certificate in English: one chapter is about as easy or difficult as another chapter, and a candidate would need to be approaching the standard of this examination before he or she could cope readily with these texts. There is some measure of grading in the exercises, those in section C being harder than those in sections A and B. On the whole, however, *A Bridge to English* is to be welcomed as a study-book at intermediate level which foreign learners of English can rely on linguistically, which is free of unnecessary and confusing grammatical terms, and which is fresh and interesting in its photographic approach.

**EXAMINATION TESTS IN ORAL ENGLISH.** Catherine McCallien and A. Taylor. Nos. I & II. *Each 16 pp. Longmans*. 1958. *Each 1s.*

These booklets contain instructions for the candidates, a passage which the candidates have to read aloud twice, an examiner's underlined copy of the passage, oral comprehension tests of various kinds, the examiner's instructions, and a pull-out form for marking.

The tests have been carefully devised and a well-qualified examiner would find them easy to administer. According to the authors they can be uniformly marked. No doubt: but how many examiners can at present be relied on to judge unerringly, as they are required to do, when a falling, a rising, or a level intonation has been used? A test of testers might be illuminating.

There is a little to quarrel with. In each of the passages an examiner's attention is called to numerous mark-earning and mark-losing points. The authors sometimes insist unreasonably on a weak form where a strong would do (as with *had* in *who had a house in the next street*), and they are far too ready to lay down the law about intonation: why should a candidate be penalized for saying a *large pile of children's* 'socks, 'shirts, and 'dresses (or even 'socks, 'shirts, and 'dresses)?

Many of the comprehension tests consist of a single question to which there is one right answer, and pronunciation as well as grammar points are included. There is excellent material in these tests: they may stimulate other people to devise tests which are similar and more comprehensive.



**ENGLISH SHORT STORIES OF TODAY.** Second Series. Selected by Dan Davin. 246 pp. *O.U.P.* 1958. 12s. 6d.; (School edition, 7s. 6d.)

This collection contains fourteen short stories by twelve of the foremost contemporary writers. In date they range from a story of Dylan Thomas taken from 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog', which appeared in 1940, to two of V. S. Pritchett's 'Collected Stories', which were published in 1956.

Mr Davin has wished to show us how the art of the most eminent authors can express itself in the severely confined limits of the short story. The passages chosen were considered suitable for schools, but there is a good deal of cynical realism in Graham Greene's 'When Greek Meets Greek' or Angus Wilson's 'Realpolitik', and biting satire in the very grim account of 'Mr. Loveday's Little Outing' by Evelyn Waugh.

The advanced foreign student of English will find the stories interesting and, of course, excellent examples of modern use of the language, but he will either need to know English customs well or to have guidance if he is to appreciate some of the details. He should perhaps be warned that the selection has given the wealthy eccentric a larger place than he fills in real life. However, some stories, such as Somerset Maugham's 'Episode', give the reader a more everyday setting.

There is very little dialect.

**COMMON ENGLISH SAYINGS.** A. Johnson. 152 pp. *Longmans.* 1958. 4s.

This is described as a collection of metaphors in everyday use and is divided into fourteen sections, which are followed by an index. Under 'Arts and the Theatre', we find 'To play second fiddle' and under 'The Sea and Ships' 'Look out for squalls'. The expressions are explained and many of them are used in sentences which illustrate their meaning.

The student of English will find a great deal of useful information in this very reasonably priced book. Had the index been a little more thorough, it would have been possible to claim that this booklet could, for practical everyday purposes, replace more expensive books of reference. If there is a second edition, the index should be expanded and some of the examples made more forceful and illuminating. However, the book can be recommended. It does give a reasonably systematic impression of much that is very difficult to understand in current English speech.

**FABLES AND FAIRY TALES** (New Method Supplementary Reader, Stage 1). Michael West. 75 pp. *Longmans.* New edition 1957. 1s. 6d.

This booklet is written within the 450-word vocabulary of New Method Reader I; 'hut' and 'ant' are two of the less usual words within the range presented. There are seventeen short stories, divided into three sections, entitled 'Fables', 'Stories of Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Fox', and 'Fairy Tales'. Among the better known stories are 'The City Mouse and the Country Mouse' and 'Rum-pel-stilt-skin'. The constructions employed are simple. For example, amongst the more difficult sentences are: 'Mr. Fox came running along the lane', and 'That night the Queen sent men into all the places near to find out as many names as they could.'

At the end of the book there are simple questions on each of the stories.

**COME ALONG.** Books IVA, IVB. K. Zeidler and H. Reimers. G. Westermann Verlag, Hamburg. Dm. 6.5.

Previous books in this excellent series were noticed in *E.L.T.* Vol. XI, No. 3 and Vol. XII, No. 3. Book IVA is at high school level. Part 1 (63 pp.): Visit to England; reading-matter with questions and well-designed grammar exercises. Part 2 (40 pp.): Sight-seeing in London; dialogues linked by narrative, half English, half German—the German is to be interpreted by a third speaker to the first (English) speaker. Part 3 (42 pp.): Notes and Vocabulary. Book IVB is similar but at secondary modern level, and the dialogues are English-English.

**THE GROUNDWORK OF ENGLISH INTONATION.** Roger Kingdon. xxxi+272 pp. Longmans. 1958. 18s.

Regular readers of this journal will not need to be reminded that as long ago as 1948 Mr Kingdon introduced us to his system of tonetic stress-marks in a series of articles entitled 'The Teaching of English Intonation'. Whatever modifications in detail individual phoneticians may feel necessary or desirable, it remains true to say that some such notation seems today indispensable for the transcription of continuous texts. It is due in some measure to Mr Kingdon's demonstration of the possibilities of his own system that texts relying on inter-linear indications of intonation seem for general purposes intolerably cumbersome, whilst phonetic transcriptions (Mr Kingdon's own texts are otherwise orthographic) which mark stress alone seem frankly inadequate. It is with considerable interest, therefore, that we approach the work under review.

Kingdon's system of tonetic stress-marks, as summarized in the Introduction to the *Groundwork* and in a table inside its front cover, comprises one mark for 'static' (i.e. level) pitch, and five marks for 'kinetic' (i.e. changing) pitch, associated with stressed syllables—each mark being superscript or subscript according to register, and doubled where necessary to indicate emphasis; three 'pitch-marks' (superscript or subscript) for level, rising or falling unstressed syllables or sequences of unstressed syllables; and one mark—a raised dot—for partially stressed syllables. The Kinetic Tones, one of which, according to Kingdon, must form the nucleus of every intonation group, are numbered from I to V, and are otherwise labelled Rising, Falling, Falling-Rising, Rising-Falling and Rising-Falling-Rising respectively. (It may be noted in passing that the author is at pains to justify his reversal of the familiar numbering of the first two, but his reasons seem wholly unconvincing.) In addition to 'Nucleus' the terms 'Prehead', 'Head', 'Body' and 'Tail' are used for intonational constituents of the utterance: these various elements combine to form Simple, Compound and Combined Tunes.

The author has thus marshalled a formidable armament, notational and terminological, with which to tackle the vagaries of English intonation. It is questionable, however, whether he has always used it to the best advantage. In the space at our disposal a few illustrations only will be possible.

The raised dot is shown in the table as the sign for partial stress on any pitch, but on the one hand it does not appear to be used for partially stressed syllables on a low level pitch, and on the other hand it is used on occasion (e.g. p. 64) for apparently fully stressed syllables as a device to indicate that the tune is 'broken upwards'. This latter usage seems doubly unfortunate, since the use of a mark for partial stress suggests—for how else could this be shown if really intended?—an often inappropriate (see p. 176 'Our cat's . . .') reduction of

rhythmical prominence; and we have been taught elsewhere (p. xxxi) to disassociate such marks from any modification of the tonal contour. Of the Low Level Tone, on the other hand, it is stated on page 4 that it 'has the value of a partial stress', and on page 22 that it is used as the normal head before a Tone IL nucleus—'Head' being defined on the same page as 'the first full stress of a group'. This Low Level Tone is also used in an obscure manner—seemingly unexplained in the *Groundwork*, but very briefly and unenlighteningly dealt with on page 28 of *English Intonation Practice*—after high level stresses. The presentation would gain greatly in clarity—and would surely be more in accord with the author's remarks in both Preface and Introduction on the confusion between stress and intonation—if a single mark (such as the raised dot) were used everywhere and only to indicate partial stress.

Tunes IH and IL, alone of the similarly numbered high and low pairs, are shown separately in the Classification of Tunes on page 245 'on account of the considerable difference in function between them'. The function of Tone IH is stated on page 124 to be exclusively interrogative and to prevent it from compounding with other tones, 'so that as a Head it occurs only before a Tone IH nucleus'. What, then, is the status of the high rising Head 'which resembles a Tone IH deprived of its interrogative quality' that we find followed by IL on page 238, and (similarly deprived?) by IILE on page 243? As the *nuclear* tone of tag questions both IH (§110a) and IL (§110f) are found, but also something (§110d) recorded as IH which on the author's admission 'occupies a rather lower position on the voice range than the normal IH, and is often without the latter's definitely interrogative quality'. By exactly what criterion, formal or notional, do we definitively separate these two? Must we, for instance, have the sudden harsh transition from IL to IH for the last of a list of alternatives in a question, as in §103c2?

The greatest difficulty likely to be encountered by the reader of this book, however, is that of distinguishing effectively between Tone IIID (as the divided form of the falling-rising tone is labelled) and a sequence of Tone II and Tone IL. The recommended criteria (p. 79) are: '(1) the relative importance of the two groups, (2) the semantic homogeneity of the whole utterance, and (3) whether there is a break between the groups. A Tune III should have its main emphasis on the falling element, a semantic homogeneity and no break'. The first two factors as criteria are very difficult to assess, and the third criterion is treacherous. The suggestion (e.g. p. 35) that the absence of a pause points to IIID is to be strongly deprecated. The reader would be well advised to look very hard at every sequence of a grave and an acute accent: for instance, the examples in §104e4 are very mixed. The barely qualified statement (p. 210) that Tune III is not used on questions in English is far from being true.

The book contains unusually long sections on sentence stress and on 'adjections' (parentheses, vocatives, &c.). In this and in other respects we are indebted to Mr Kingdon for the ground he has covered, even if we do not always agree with his findings. Some earlier studies of English intonation have suffered from over-simplification: we must not now complain if a courageous attempt has been made to deal with the subject in all its very real complexity. In his Preface the author exhorts the foreign student not to be disheartened at the prospect of this complexity, and speaks of presenting the significant elements in 'an easily assimilable form'. His book appears, however, to contain too many inconsistencies and uncertainties for the reader to feel confident that with sufficient perseverance he will learn to operate the system in its entirety for himself: in consequence it cannot in its present form be unreservedly recommended to the foreign learner.



**ENGLISH INTONATION PRACTICE.** Roger Kingdon (with conversational texts by N. C. Scott). xxii+184 pp. *Longmans*. 1958. 6s. This is a companion volume to *The Groundwork of English Intonation*, and includes a condensed account of the theory expounded in that work and discussed in the immediately preceding review. This explanatory matter in part precedes, and in part is interspersed with, graduated intonation-marked orthographic texts, and it is combined with reading, ear-training and composition exercises. The texts are divided into three stages whereby the reader is introduced to the simple tunes before the compound, and to the simple tones (I-III) before the complex (IV-V); and they illustrate—at each stage—conversation, drama, anecdotes, prose and verse. The book ends with six pages of extracts from Shakespeare.

The exercises which are a feature of the explanatory sections are designed to give the learner systematic practice in the elements of English intonation before he tries his hand at the more 'haphazard' arrangements of ordinary reading material of greater length. For the ear-training exercises, as the author points out, the assistance of a competent teacher is necessary, and help of this kind, as with all phonetic texts, would be most useful throughout. The composition exercises require an adequate appreciation of the way in which the various intonation patterns are used by English speakers, and for more detailed information on this point the reader is referred to the *Groundwork*. If once, by one means or another, the student can learn to interpret the notation and to give the symbols their correct prosodic values—no inconsiderable feat, this—he will have plenty of useful material on which to exercise his skill.

Of the texts themselves the author rightly claims that they exceed in volume and variety anything hitherto presented. The content of the conversational texts is admirably varied and unusually natural, so that they may be studied with advantage by the foreign learner quite apart from their intonation. The three drama passages contribute a different type of dialogue, but might well have included one really modern piece. The anecdotes, containing as they do some narrative matter, serve as a light-hearted introduction to the prose passages, which range from purely descriptive material to letters and even proverbs. The verse covers a similarly wide field, though here again some concession to more up-to-date material would have been welcome: we can find not a single line written by a living poet. The inclusion of Shakespearian extracts seems very sensible in a comprehensive work, since there can be few serious students of English who do not at some time have to wrestle with passages of this kind.

**PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING.** W. M. Ryburn and K. B. Forge. 216 pp., illustrated. *O.U.P.* 2nd edition, 1957. 4s. 6d. **THE TEACHER AND HIS PUPILS.** Hubert J. Byrne. 185 pp., illustrated. *O.U.P.* 1953. 5th impression 1956. 5s. **TEACHER-TRAINING.** John Hargreaves. 92 pp., illustrated. *O.U.P.* 1948. 4th impression 1957. 3s. 6d. (All from 'A Teacher's Library', *Oxford University Press*.) **TEACH YOURSELF TO TEACH.** L. Wilkes. 194 pages, illustrated. *English Universities Press*. 1946. Reprinted 1956. 6s.

All these books cover partly the same ground, with variations in bias as indicated by the titles. Those from the Oxford University Press have been written by authors with experience of conditions in Africa and India. Many of the pictures show African schools. Some of the recommendations, especially in Civics and Hygiene, apply only to newly-developed countries. The part played by the teacher in a small community in these countries is quite different from that of



his British counterpart. These books also discuss the special difficulties of overseas teachers who may have to teach all subjects in English, which is not the children's mother-tongue.

The authors all attempt some self-criticism. That is, they invite the reader to think whether they have caught and maintained his attention, as he is urged to interest his class. By this criterion the best book is easily 'The Teacher and his Pupils.' It is short, pithy and humorous and its excellent advice is graven on the memory by 'pin-men' illustrations. The style of these is an admirable model for blackboard work. Of course they are not suitable as they stand. Among the 'don't do this' pictures children everywhere in the world would be sure to find an all-too-faithful portrait of their own teacher in his worst mood. This is a book no staff-room should be without, and no child should see.

Somewhat more substantial, though far from heavy, is 'Teacher-Training', written by a mission schoolmaster to help lecturers at a new training college. Some of his advice, such as that on selecting candidates or organizing teaching practice, can be used only by college staffs. Through them it could have a widely beneficial influence, but it would be a pity for it to reach only so small a readership and it could be very useful to headmasters completing the training of young students from the colleges, or responsible for the guidance of pupil-teachers in their pre-college years. The book is eminently practical. It discusses fundamental questions, as for instance the aim of a training college. This must, by a judicious balance of staff guidance and student responsibility, turn the docile pupil, pride of his village school, into an adventurous and self-reliant teacher. The author on the whole prefers discussion groups and research to lectures. He comes down to such details as the right proportion of staff to students and provision for adequate free time—essential if the high standards set by the book are to be reached.

'The Principles of Teaching' contains valuable matter which is worth reading a chapter at a time and pondering carefully. It could be used hand-in-hand with school practice, and then re-read later in the teacher's career as a kind of home refresher course. Examples of the telling and thought-provoking ideas in the book are: 'Our most important duty is to enable our students to get on without us', and 'Teachers who think they know how to teach are dead and done with.' There is, perhaps, a lack of realism in the suggestion of a self-rating graph. Young teachers cannot find it easy to give themselves one of seven possible grades while distinguishing between 'self-control' and 'patience' or between 'love of the work' and 'sense of vocation'. Having completed such a document, the young teacher is invited to place it at the disposal of his headmaster! More useful advice is that teachers learn much that is instructive about themselves from setting their pupils an essay on 'The Kind of Teacher I Like Best'. There are useful sections on all kinds of method and organization, two of the best being on questioning and projects. Your reviewer began this book in the train and found it so absorbing that she did not notice when she reached the terminus.

'Teach Yourself to Teach' forms one of a well-known series inviting us to 'teach ourselves' anything from 'Advertising and Publicity' to 'Woodwork for Boys'. It is not, like those above, specifically aimed at countries outside Britain. What it says is true anywhere. It has some graphs but few illustrations. After a rather slow start it improves rapidly and its less general and more detailed instructions are very valuable. A particularly useful section is that on problems, their devising and grading, and how children reason in working them out. In 'learning by heart' we consider the difference between learning poetry and learning the multiplication table, and we are reminded in 'use of the black-board' that this visual aid should 'serve as a constant example of neat, well-planned, well-executed work.'



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